

## A BRAVE GIRL.

BY ADA F. STRICKLAND.

Lena Davis was a singing-bird: wherever she went might be heard the sweet, cheery voice caroling some old ballad. She was the very light of the dark old farm-house, and of its aged owners, the fond grandparents, whose dull ears caught even the faintest notes of her voice. Singing, she went into the cellar, or into the garret. She sang when she called the cows, and sang while she milked them.

But this evening her voice was strangely silent as she picked her way over the stones and briars in the rough road she was traveling in search of the stray cow, whose absence would tell materially on the butter she was saving to buy a new dress. It was as if the finger of Providence had been placed on the girl's lips, sealing them for her own good; for this was generally her favorite time for song.

It was almost nightfall, and the way a gloomy one, leading her to an old, disused graveyard, whose short, sweet grass she thought perhaps the lost Daisy was cropping. Lena would have scorned the idea of being afraid to pass through the lonely place, but generally it was a comfort to her to hear even her own voice break the solemn stillness.

But now, as we have said, she was strangely silent. Suddenly her light steps were arrested by the sound of voices so near her that she obeyed her first impulse, and shrank closely behind a large tree just in time to escape the notice of two men who had thrown themselves down on the grass beneath another tree only a few yards distant.

If there was anything Lena was afraid of, it was a "tramp;" and to that species she knew these two men belonged by their ragged clothes, and sticks with bundles thrown across them. In the gathering darkness she could not see their faces, but each word they uttered was plainly audible.

"I tell you, Dirk," said one of them, half rising in his earnestness, "I know the place, and the old man always has money about the house. There 's nobody with the old folks but the girl, and a half-grown boy,

who does the chores during the day, but goes home at night. I worked there during harvest one summer, and know all about it."

"Well, what 's your plan?" asked the other.

"Why, just to go and ask for a night's lodging about bed-time. I heard the old man boast once that no traveler was ever turned away from his door. Once in, I'll manage the rest."

"All right, chum," was the answer. "I 'm in for anything to raise a little cash. But let 's get into somebody's barn out of the damp. It a'n't good for the rheumatics."

And grumblingly they arose and walked on directly past the shrinking girl, who could hear her own heart beat until they were out of sight.

Then, pausing not a moment for thought, she ran swiftly on in the opposite direction, her thoughts flying with her feet. The nearest house was quite a mile away, and there she knew a number of men were at work. She must reach there, and alarm them, and be back home before the tramps should come.

It was not a severe task to one accustomed to walking, country-born and bred, as our little heroine was; but still she was slightly out of breath when she reached her destination, and a little incoherent in her story. But there was one among the handsome young farmers who crowded about her who was quick to understand the slightest word that fell from those red lips, and in a few moments her story and her plan were clear to all.

"You may come as many as you like, and as soon as you like, after eight o'clock; but not one minute sooner, for fear you frighten them away: and you must not enter the house till you hear me singing. I want to make sure of the gentlemen."

She was quite her clear-headed, resolute self now, and shook her head decidedly when the young farmer aforesaid put on his hat to attend her home.

"No, Will," she said firmly, but with a

smile that softened the refusal, "I must go home alone, or they will suspect something, and we will lose our game. Good-night."

And she was off like an arrow across the hill.

Her plan was well matured before she reached the house. Finding the lost Daisy, she drove her home, and milked her as carelessly as if such a burden of anxiety did not lay upon her heart.

The old folks were beginning to be very anxious about their one pet lamb, and she knew she must keep a cheerful face before them; but she could not sing. Whenever she made the attempt her breath seemed to fail her. More than once during that long evening grandpa asked, in his joking way, "Where is our singing-bird gone, little one?" and she gave him some playful answer, listening, meanwhile, with painful earnestness for the heavy tread and knock at the door,—knitting with feverish eagerness, or peeling apples with an intentness that would have seemed ludicrous to a looker-on not posted in the whys and wherefores.

At last, when the minute-hand of the old clock pointed to ten minutes to eight, she heard the tread, the knock, and to save her life could not repress a nervous shiver.

"Why, kitten! are you getting nervous?" laughed the old man, taking the lamp from the mantel, and going to the door.

Knitting and ball fell from her lap as she listened. She heard just what she thought she would hear, the request for a night's lodging, and the unsuspecting old man's answer,—

"Come in, come in, friends: I never turn a traveler away."

Then she arose, and busied herself in another part of the room to hide her agitation. When she had conquered this, she came back to the fire, which was very comfortable this chilly autumn evening, staring narrowly at the unwelcome guests.

They were ill-looking fellows, strong as unprincipled and unscrupulous. This she

saw at a glance; while they, looking furtively at her from under their heavy brows, saw only a bashful girl, whose cheeks reddened and paled in the firelight.

They were not disposed to be very talkative. Grandma nodded over her knitting, and very soon grandpa said what she had been longing to hear.

"Kitten, fix a bed for these friends."

Her heart beat faster. She felt the moment was near; but there was no sign of agitation in the steady little hand that lighted the bedroom lamp, nor the firm step across the room, and out into the unused chamber.

She heard no stealthy step behind her,—she did not know danger was so near until, as she turned to leave the room, she was confronted by one of the men she had left at the fireside. Her face blanched, but she looked steadily at him.

"Your bed is ready, sir," she said, attempting to pass him.

The next moment the lamp was taken from her hand, an arm thrown heavily about her, and a hand clasped across her mouth.

"Point to where the old man keeps his money, and you and they are safe: refuse, and you are at our mercy," whispered the coarse voice in her ear.

The next moment he flung her from him in an agony of pain. She had bitten his finger through and through.

And now her clear, loud voice rang out through the house in a wild, strange song.

Before he could reach her again, he was thrown heavily to the floor: the room was full of armed men, and he saw his game was at an end.

Another pair of arms were around the girl,—strong, steady arms from which she did not shrink, and which were to shield her through all her future life. And years after, Will Denham loved to tell how his wife, when she was Lena Davis, conquered the burglar with her only weapon,—her firm, white teeth.

## A FORTUNATE ESCAPE.

BY C. E. STONE.

Young, handsome, witty, and an heiress: what wonder that Ethel Edgeworth had a score of suitors? The only wonder is that her pretty head was not turned by the admiration and flattery of her numerous admirers.

But she was possessed of abundant good sense, and, though for a year fortune-hunters had done their best to entrap her, she still remained heart-whole, and waited trustingly for the right man to propose.

Who that lucky individual would be, no one could assert; but the favored ones seemed to be two.

One, a young and seemingly prosperous merchant, — Bertram Barthold by name, — a perfect Adonis in looks, and a great favorite with the ladies: light hair, blue eyes, a complexion of which any belle might be proud, and a profusion of flaxen hair on his face which nearly concealed his mouth, and prevented the observation of its workings. His manners were highly polished, showing a familiarity with good society, his dress was always faultless, and his attentions to Ethel Edgeworth were pointed and unmistakable.

He drove a splendid pair of horses, and often called for her in the afternoon for a drive in the Park; for they lived in New York.

The other was Rodney Raymond, a young author and critic, not remarkable for his beauty, but the possessor of a frank and pleasant face, and with no fortune but the pay he received for the products of his pen. But he moved in the best society, and though his clothes were not in the height of the fashion, still he was a general favorite, and his society was much sought after by those who had more respect for brains than money.

Ethel's father was quite partial to Mr. Raymond, and he often brought the young author to the house to dinner.

Rodney was deeply in love with the fair mistress, and, though he was always polite, and never familiar, the quick eye of Ethel detected the admiration in his glance when he looked at her, and the tremor of his voice

when he addressed her. These signs of his love she never appeared to notice; but his delicate though unobtrusive attentions were not distasteful to her.

It was a bright day in January, and the ground was covered with a carpet of fresh snow, and as Ethel sat in her luxuriously appointed boudoir the jingle of merry sleigh-bells was borne to her ears, and made her long to join the participants in the sleighing carnival.

Her wishes were anticipated, for presently one of the servants knocked on her door, and handed her a card on which was Bertram Barthold's name, and a request that she would do him the honor to take a sleigh-ride with him.

She was soon ready, and half an hour later they were mingling with the bright throng which was moving toward the Park.

The air was bracing, the sleighing excellent, and the horses swift, and as they flew over the crisp snow the lady and gentleman kept up a pleasant conversation.

On the way home, Bertram improved the opportunity to declare his love. This he did in choice language, and, figuratively speaking, laid himself and his fortune at her feet.

Ethel was not totally unprepared for this avowal, but she was hardly ready to give herself up for life to Bertram, of whose antecedents she knew nothing, until she had learned more of him. So she put him off, saying that it was so unexpected that he must give her time to consider, — at the same time telling him that he might hope.

"When will you give me your final answer?" he inquired eagerly.

"A week from tonight," was her reply.

Before leaving her, he invited her to attend the theatre the following evening, when a new dramatic star, a lady of reputed talent, was to make her debut before a New-York audience. The invitation was accepted.

In due season Bertram called for her, and they proceeded to the theatre. There was an immense house, and among the audience Ethel recognized Rodney Raymond. He

bowed, and she returned the salutation. He had started to go where she sat, and speak with her, when the curtain rose.

The play was "The Lady of Lyons," and the star, who was a most beautiful woman, was received with a storm of applause.

At sight of her, Bertram uttered an involuntary exclamation. Ethel turned toward him, and noticed that his face was colorless, and his eyes had a horrified look.

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed.

"Nothing,—nothing," he gasped. "I am feeling a little ill: if you will excuse me a moment, I will step into the lobby, where it is cooler."

He arose to depart, and just at that moment the actress looked in their direction, and, with a shriek of terror, fainted.

Instantly all was confusion. Women screamed, and men shouted, and in the midst of the hubbub the curtain was lowered. But the manager quickly appeared, and announced that, owing to a sudden indisposition which had seized her, M<sup>lle</sup> Stella would not be able to play Pauline, but that one of the company would take the part.

The confusion had now subsided. Ethel turned to speak to Bertram; but he was gone.

What did it mean? What was the cause of his strange conduct? Did it have any connection with the indisposition of the actress? What should she do if Bertram did not return?

All these questions presented themselves to her mind. A solution of the last one only was offered by Rodney Raymond, who approached her.

"Will you please find Mr. Barthold?" she requested.

He started to execute her mission, but soon returned, and announced that he was not to be found.

"What can have come over him?" she asked.

"I am sure I am as much in the dark as you are," replied Rodney; "but I am quite sure he has left the theatre."

"Will you please take me home?" requested Ethel. "I don't care to see any more of the play."

Rodney complied with her request, and called a carriage.

As they drove by the stage-entrance, they heard a commotion, followed by the report of a pistol.

Their driver stopped, and Rodney, pistol in hand, sprang from the carriage, and rushed to the sidewalk, where a woman had fallen with a pistol ball in her side. It was the actress.

"That is the man," she gasped, pointing to a fleeting figure.

Quick as thought, Rodney aimed and fired. The assassin fell in his tracks.

Rodney now helped lift the wounded actress, and bore her to the carriage which was in waiting for her.

"I will go home with her," said Ethel, springing to the ground.

So she followed the actress into the carriage.

Meantime, a couple of men had lifted the insensible body of the murderer, and borne it into the light of a street lamp.

Rodney gazed at the prostrate form, and was surprized and horrified to recognize in the ghastly features those of Bertram Barthold.

A policeman had now arrived, and he took charge of the wounded man, who had received Rodney's bullet between his shoulders, and took him to the hospital in the carriage lately occupied by Ethel and Rodney.

The latter then mounted the seat with the driver, and directed him to take them to the residence of the actress.

She appeared to be weak from loss of blood, but was still conscious. When they arrived at the house she was carried to her room, and Rodney summoned a physician.

He pronounced her wound a mortal one, but did all in his power to relieve her suffering.

Ethel remained by her side, having sent Rodney to inform her father of her whereabouts.

Toward morning the actress awoke from a troubled sleep, and called Ethel to her side.

"Give me a glass of wine," she said.

Ethel did as requested, and then took a seat by the side of the unhappy woman.

"Let me take your hand in mine," said the sufferer.

Ethel took her feverish hand.

"I don't know who you are," continued the actress, "but you have been very kind to me, and, though I may never repay you, Heaven will reward you for your goodness."

"I am going to die. I can feel the hand of death pressing heavily on me; but I am

glad to die, for my life has been a bitter one, and only death will bring me that peace which is denied me here. I will tell you my sad story, for it may be a warning to you in the future not to trust too much to a man of whom you know but little.

"I am twenty-five years old, and was born in London. My mother was an actress in one of the London theatres, and I went upon the stage when only seven years old.

"My mother died when I was only fourteen, and I was left an orphan in the great city. My father I never saw: he was an actor also, and died before I was born.

"After my mother's death I was retained at the theatre where she had played, for I had already displayed remarkable powers for one of my age.

"Here I remained until I was twenty, slowly rising in my profession, and at this time I filled the position of juvenile lady.

"Then I met the man who was destined to be the curse of my life, — the one who is now my murderer, — Bertram Barthold. He was dramatic critic on one of the London papers, and had free access to the stage and green-room. We became acquainted, and I soon learned to love him.

"Judge of my happiness, then, when he asked me to be his wife. We were married very quietly, and as he had some property left him we took a wedding-tour to Italy.

"There I lived a year of the most perfect bliss, and there my babe was born. My husband had showed me every attention heretofore, but now he began to act strangely. He received numerous letters from London which seemed to irritate him greatly, and he would often leave me, and be gone all day and night, and when he returned his manner would be strange and excitable.

"One morning when he returned I asked him what was the trouble. He flew into a perfect rage, and called me an inquisitive fool.

"I expostulated with him. Then he told me that I was *not* his wife, but that he had a wife in London before he married me, and that she had followed him here.

"I was horror-stricken at this intelligence, and fell on my knees before him, and wildly entreated him to kill me in my shame.

"He laughed mockingly, and seizing my darling babe from my arms he dashed it

from the open window upon the cruel stones beneath!

"Oh the horror of that moment! I rushed down-stairs in a perfect frenzy of grief, and there found the remains of my darling, bruised and mangled beyond all recognition.

"I was delirious with anguish, and knew not what I did. I was arrested, and borne to prison; but ere my trial for infanticide — for my inhuman husband had caused my arrest for killing my darling child — I was pronounced insane, and consigned to a mad-house.

"For a year I was in confinement, and saw not the face of a friend. Then I was pronounced cured, and set at liberty.

"I knew not where to go. My deceiver had deserted me, and I could find no traces of him.

"For two days I wandered about, begging my food, and looking in vain for a friendly face.

"The third day I became desperate, and determined on suicide. Accordingly, just after sunset, I approached the river, and, seeing no one about, prepared to plunge in, and end my sorrows.

"I was about to make the fatal spring, when a hand was laid on my arm, and a manly voice asked in English what I was going to do.

"I turned, and beheld a young man who looked upon me pityingly. I was angry at first, but his face expressed so much sympathy that I determined to tell him my story, and ask his aid.

"He listened attentively, and when I had finished told me he would assist me. He took me to the house of the American consul, who was a countryman and a friend of his. I repeated my story to the consul, whom I found to be a very kind-hearted man, and then they asked me where I wanted to go. After some discussion, I determined to go to America.

"These kind friends made the necessary arrangements, and giving me a sum of money sufficient to pay my expenses, and provide for me after my arrival till I could procure an engagement, started me on my way to New Orleans.

"I arrived there without mishap, and, thanks to a letter from my benefactors, obtained an engagement at one of the theatres.

"My success was a surprise to myself;

and I was soon in receipt of many flattering offers from managers. One of these I accepted, as it would enable me to travel, and I was in hopes to meet Bertram Barthold, who I understood had fled to this country. The consul had told me that a person of his description had left for New Orleans about the time of the murder.

"But I did not find him until last night, when I accidentally discovered him with you at the theatre. The shock was too much for me, and I fainted. When I recovered I started for my carriage, which was in waiting.

"At the outside door of the theatre Bertram Barthold was lying in wait for me, and when I appeared he fired, and then fled.

"This is my story, and may your life be as happy as mine has been miserable. I have one more favor to ask of you. If you should ever meet Rodney Raymond" —

"What!" interrupted Ethel, "Rodney Raymond?"

"Yes: that is the name of the American who befriended me in Italy. He was correspondent for a New-York paper."

"It must be the same," said Ethel.

Just then there was a gentle tap at the door, and on opening it Ethel beheld Rodney. She asked the actress if she should admit her friend.

"Certainly," was the reply.

He advanced to the bedside.

"My preserver!" exclaimed the actress, as she recognized him.

He took her hand in his.

"You see my sorrows are nearly at an end," she said, with a faint smile. "Where is Barthold?"

"He has been taken to the hospital," replied Rodney.

"Heaven forgive him, as I do," prayed the dying woman.

She held out her other hand to Ethel, who took hold of it.

"May Heaven bless you both, my only friends," she murmured.

Then a smile broke over her features, and with the words, "My babe, — my darling!" she sank to her long rest.

Silently and tenderly Ethel and Rodney folded the cold hands over her breast, and then left the chamber of death.

Ethel and Rodney attended to the burial of the unhappy actress, and raised a modest head-stone to her remains.

Bertram Barthold died of his wound, after making a full confession of his crimes.

When Rodney Raymond proposed for Ethel's hand, she did not say him nay, for she had at last found the man she could love; and in after years, when surrounded by her happy and interesting family, she often dropped a tear to the memory of her to whom she owed her fortunate escape.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF OTHER DAYS.—II.

BY EDWARD DUSSEAU.

### A GLIMPSE OF THE LOWER DANUBE.

In November last we took our leave of you, with considerable regret. Innumerable thoughts, suggested by the scenes through which we had led you, crowded upon us; and we had an almost irresistible desire to go on, to lead you through others. We were, however, obliged to resist the temptation, but we said, in our mind, not "*adieu*," but simply "*au revoir*."

We parted in the roadstead of Soulinele, and there we meet again to gaze upon a very different scene from that presented by the Golden Horn. We have no caiques here darting under our bows; and, instead of the placid waters of the harbor of the Turkish capital, we have a somewhat boisterous roadstead, with three steamers, a bark, and two brigs riding at their anchors, and pitching bows under. It is blowing a stiff breeze, almost a gale, but the wind is off shore and there is no danger of our being obliged to slip our cables. The scene is a dreary one. The shore presents a long, low beach, and the turbid waters of the Danube as they flow out discolor the surface of the roadstead. Though such a short distance from Constantinople, it is cold, and we are obliged to muffle ourselves up in great-coats, and to keep moving about, so as not to get chilled. Black, threatening clouds are piling up over the land, — everything has a forbidding aspect; and the whistling of the wind through the ship's top-hamper seems an appropriate accompaniment to the desolate scene. Here and there is a small opening in the overhanging clouds, which seem so low, through which the sun occasionally peeps for a moment as they fly to the eastward; and, look in what direction we will, there is nothing to cheer. But we are not despondent: there is always something in such a scene as this to lure one's thoughts away from self.

We lay here the rest of the day, without communicating with any one from the shore. At sunset the weather has moderated, and the sea is more tranquil. The evening is passed in conversation, and by playing a rubber of whist. The next morning we are not up until after sunrise; and, as we step on deck, are greeted by a glowing

sun, which gives everything a cheerful look. As we look toward the mouth of the river, we perceive a small steamer just coming out to the roadstead, and heading in our direction, which the captain informs us is a tender, bringing us a load of wheat in bulk. We are soon able to read her name, — "*Colocatronis*," — and hawsers are got ready to pass her as she comes alongside. She soon reaches us, with her deck covered with Greeks, who have come to discharge the cargo. Her side is covered with fenders, made of fagots tightly bound together with rope; and, after a series of manœuvres with the engine, she is finally made fast, and grinding away at her fenders against the side of our vessel. A staging is then rigged, to serve as a gangway from one vessel to the other, along which the Greeks are placed; and the transshipment of the wheat is commenced at once, in flat baskets, which are passed along, from man to man, from the hold of the tender to that of our vessel. A double stream of these baskets is kept rapidly and constantly moving along over the stage, — one of full baskets from the tender to our vessel, and another of empty ones returning to be refilled. The wheat is thus kept constantly flowing into our hold, and raises so much dust as to compel the trimmers to come upon deck by turns to take a breathing space. We cannot help, of course, observing the Greeks at their work; and we are forced to acknowledge that they are working harder, faster, and more effectively than our sailors could. They all appear gay, and are constantly laughing, chatting, and cracking jokes together, as they pass the grain along from vessel to vessel. They do not look, however, as though they wasted much water over themselves. We will wager that they do not comb their hair or wash their faces as often as once a week. They wear sheepskin caps, with the woolly side out; and, when they first came, they all had on great-coats of the same material, which they have thrown aside to work.

At four o'clock P. M. the cargo of the tender is all transferred to the hold of our vessel, and we repair on board of the former to proceed on shore, dressed in hunting-

suits extemporized for the occasion, and well booted. We each have an English rifle, and plenty of ammunition, for we intend to land, on our way up to Galatz, to shoot wild boars. Soon after boarding the tender, it is cast adrift from the larger vessel, its engine is set in motion, and we leave a brownish-yellow muddy wake behind us as we steam into the "Blue Danube." The dirty, yellow Danube would be a more appropriate appellation. As we approach the mouth of the river, the turbid water rushes by us, is stirred up by our screw, and made still more dirty in appearance. We pass the light-house by which a few years before hostile fleets passed on their way to the Crimea; and we are soon anchored within the river, and abreast of the village, which, in the twilight, looks dismal enough. Here we pass the night. The tender has good accommodations, is well found; and we have an excellent supper. After our meal, we land, and are entertained by the resident agent, who is a well-informed Greek, and with him stroll about the village. We receive a hearty welcome in every dwelling which we enter; and we have every opportunity offered to observe the people and objects about us. The dwellings are all of the same pattern; and those which we got acquainted with consist of two main apartments. We conclude that all the inmates sleep together in one of them. The male portion of the company we met here is composed of men who are prototypes of those who worked to tranship the grain from the tender to our vessel; and the females are what we expected to find them. Some are comely in features, and neatly though poorly clad; these are the exception; and they all bear the traces of hard labor. But we are surprised to find them all so gay, and with seemingly no thought for the morrow. Every one seems well contented with his or her lot, and their merry, hearty laugh denotes freedom from care. They are very hospitable; and everywhere we go they offer us refreshments out of their scanty store, which we, of course, refuse. We make the children small presents, which our Greek host endeavors to restrain us from doing. He even tries to persuade us to take back our shillings, and replace them with pennies: he fears we will spoil these simple people if we take any notice of them, and urges upon us the necessity of making them "keep their place."

These poor, simple-minded people, both sexes, like most others in their condition, are great lovers of strong drink. They will part with necessities to procure the nasty, adulterated Holland gin which is brought here by masters of vessels; but, contrary to our expectations, we meet with no one who is intoxicated. We are sorry to say that we have met more drunkenness in the United States than any where else, save Australia.

Our Greek host is so fearful that we will spoil these people that he does all he can to get us back again to his house. We accordingly return there, and have a rubber of whist. He treats us to very good Greek wine, which we enjoy; and we then return to the "Colocatronis" to sleep. We have passed the day monotonously on board of our vessel in the roadstead, sometimes reading, sometimes watching the Greeks at their work, and continually wishing for night to come, that we might get on shore and see something new. Now it will be readily allowed that this is hard work, and that one is generally more fatigued after such a spell than after a day of labor. We are therefore tired, and only too glad to get on board again and to rest. We sleep too soundly to dream, and do not get up in the morning until called by the steward to get ready for breakfast. "Turning out," we find our bath-tubs ready, and we are soon in them. At nine o'clock we rise from the table refreshed by a hearty meal, and, muffling ourselves up in great-coats, go on deck, where we have to keep moving about to keep warm. At ten it is much warmer, and we can sit down and have a comfortable chat. There are several sailing vessels within the river; and they too are making preparations to go up to Galatz. There is one so near as to enable us to see all that is done on her deck. We notice that the crew have coiled a hauling-line, one end of which is fastened to the mast above the life-rail, on the forecastle; and, our curiosity being aroused thereby, we ask the captain why it is put there. He at once goes in to explain, and first calls our attention to what he calls bridges, which are large loops of ratlin stuff spliced into the line at and near the loose end. "Sailing vessels," he continues, "are hauled up by their crews, just as canal-boats are drawn by horses. The men are landed with the free end of the line, they put the bridges over their shoulders, and, walking up the bank, they pull their vessel,



which is kept in the channel by the helmsman, after them."

"Why don't they have tugs?" we ask.

"Oh, well-l-l—I don't know. There's too much 'old foggism' here. These sailing vessels are nearly all "Geordies," and their captains are very saving. They would object to paying a reasonable price for towage, notwithstanding that the time they lose in hauling up their vessels in this way is worth double as much. Geordies always are 'penny wise, pound foolish.'"

At noon all necessary supplies for our upward trip are shipped, and the agent sends us a dozen bottles of his wine to enliven us on the way up. At half-past twelve we are under way, and sit gazing at the banks, as we smoke our pipes, filled with Turkish tobacco, which we brought in the bazaar at Constantinople.

We are going toward the heart of a grand and picturesque country, and we certainly are not going to let any object escape our sight as we proceed. Here the banks of the river are low, and the country is quite level for a long distance from them. Removed from the banks, we see columns of smoke ascending here and there, and occasionally get a glimpse of woodlands. But we expect something different before the end of the day. We are now between two large, low deltoid islands, of which we know very little; and all we see up and down stream is the tall, frost-bitten grass, which grows along the banks. There is quite a fleet going up to Galatz; and the wind is fair. This enables the sailing vessels—mostly brigs and barques—to proceed against the current. So many sails give the river a lively appearance, and relieve the scene of that monotony which would otherwise be irksome. These sailing vessels are mostly English, and nearly all of the latter are "Geordies," from Sunderland, North and South Shields, and New Castle. There is near us a Dutch brig, — a beauty, — which appears to great advantage in contrast with the Geordies, which are nearly all old vessels, and not very clean. This Dutchman has a clean hull, free from rusty streaks down its sides. Her rigging is well set up, her spars are clean, and her running gear is all of the best manilla. She is near enough for us to see that there are no badly made splices in any of it. But she appears too much as though she had but just donned a holiday attire; and we con-

clude that she discharged her outward cargo at Constantinople, — we can see that she is in ballast, — and that she has been painted up at Soulinele, while waiting for a favorable opportunity to sail up. We should prefer to see her a month hence; we could then form a better opinion of her master and officers. The Geordies, however, appear all the worse on account of her proximity; and we cannot help contrasting the two classes of vessels. The Geordies are nearly all dirty, and there is an uncouthness about their appearance which is peculiarly their own, and which we cannot explain, — independent of their want of cleanliness. But they excel all the others of the fleet in the seaman-like manner in which they are handled. We have seen them in the Thames dodging across the bows of steamers, and have often been nettled by what appeared almost foolhardiness in their manner of working up the stream to London, obliging us to be continually on the *qui vive* not to run them down. But we have never seen one meet with an accident; and we will always readily allow that a Geordie skipper handles his vessel in a most masterly manner. None whom we have known — and we have been intimately acquainted and been on shipboard with many — ever showed any indecision in cases of emergency. They always acted promptly and effectively, and were always most trustworthy.

So much for the Geordies. Something else claims our attention now. The river broadens ahead of us, and we are evidently near the end of the islands between which we have been steaming. Already on our port-bow, and over the land, we see the smoke of Tultscha. We shall soon see Ismail over our starboard-bow. We can just discern, far ahead on the verge of the horizon, the islets which are so numerous where the river divides to form the delta. These appear like little cloudy specks from directly ahead to about a point on each bow. They are an interesting sight, for they are continually changing in appearance as we approach them. The cloudy specks which they present gradually assumed well-defined shapes on a background of blue sky with patches of snowy clouds whose upper edges are tinged by the setting sun. The coloring is marvelous; and the *ensemble* of the scene ahead of us, with the horizon just beyond the islets, is one that it would be labor in

vain for the best painter to attempt to reproduce. This is really better than the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, though not so dazzling. For every rod we advance we have a new picture, which makes us forget while we gaze at it all cares, and vanishes every thought that could lessen our enjoyment. But we have reached the upper part of the delta, and are emerging into the main portion of the river. We are among the islets, and broad on our starboard-bow the smoke is curling over *Ismail*. Its sight produces new sensations, and our deck presents a scene of great activity, — almost confusion. We are to land there, and remain over night and the next day. We shall then be picked up by another tender, which will pass on its way to Galatz to load. We accordingly examine, wipe, and load our rifles ready for our tramp, and we assure ourselves that nothing is missing in our traveling-cases. Our Greek agent at Soulinele had not forgotten to furnish us with a guide, who is also to act as the huntsman of our party; and we make him take a good and to him luxurious meal, to keep him in good humor, and sharpen his zeal to serve us. We then repair to the cabin and have supper. This meal, all considered, is taken more pleasantly than any since we have been together; and the bracing air which we have enjoyed on deck has sharpened our appetites. Some of us talk loud about what we shall do, and how many boars we shall shoot; and an old hunter would have smiled to listen to us, and soon have learned that none of us had ever seen a wild boar. Our stock of Greek wine is soon diminished, and our hilarity makes us generous; for we send a bottle up to our guide to regale himself with, and give him a good opinion of the party he is to serve. We drink the healths of all the crowned heads, — Queen Victoria's in two big bumpers, — and just as one proposes the health of the next President of the States a voice cries down the companion-way, —

“The boat's ready, gentlemen!”

In an instant we are all on our feet, and hurrying to our staterooms, from which we soon return with our rifles and traveling-cases, and proceed at once on deck. The gangway steps are in position, and the “gig” is “bowed off” at their lower extremity, ready for our use. The crew take their places, we take ours, the painter is cast off from the vessel, and we are adrift

on the Danube. The oars are at once plied by vigorous hands, and we are shooting toward the landing-place of *Ismail*. As we go we talk incessantly, — Greek wine is a great help to conversation, — our gayety increases, and we all resolve to make the most of the time at our disposal. We have quite a pull before us, and therefore ample time to gaze about. The vessel we have left is keeping just enough speed on her engine to stem the current, and no more. She therefore appears to be motionless on the mirror-like surface of the river. The air is bracing, and the temperature is just as we wish it. It is comfortably warm, and so clear that we can see a long distance in all directions. Hence everything conspires to make our situation most enjoyable; and, as we near the landing, the new objects which are constantly appearing and claiming a share of our attention dispels every trace of monotony and weariness. We pass boats which we shall not attempt to describe, and the merry laugh of their crews denotes a contentment of which, in our inexperience, we do not expect to find any trace. Our minds are somewhat prejudiced against this region, and are filled with thoughts of the *knout*, — which our guide assures us is used very frequently even here in Moldavia, — and Russian despotism is general; but we are forced to acknowledge that the people are not constantly groaning under their yoke, and a casual observer would put them down as one of the happiest races in existence. We have not, however, much time to meditate upon this subject. We are busy with our own particular affairs, and, for the time being, are inclined to be somewhat selfish, — to think of little else than our individual comfort and enjoyment. We are about to get acquainted with the Moldavians; and, as we approach the landing, we are struck by the appearance of this quaint-looking town, with its half-Mohammedan, half-Christian aspect. As we jump on shore we are met by a Greek, who fortunately happens to be the one to whom our Soulinele friend, the agent of the company, has given us letters of introduction. He at once leads the way to his residence. He speaks good French, and we have therefore no difficulty in conversing with him. In fact he seems more French than Greek, and he has that same vivacity so characteristic of the natives of sunny France. He even has a trace of the *patots* of Provence in his speech; and it is

very evident he has passed some time at Marseilles. Immediately after our arrival at his dwelling, he leads us to our apartments, tells us to make ourselves at home, and bows himself out, saying that he will expect us in the dining-room as soon as we shall have completed our toilets. We find all the conveniences which are usually found in first-class dwellings in France; and on all sides there are objects which remind us of that land where we have passed so many happy months. It takes us but a short time to make ourselves presentable, and then proceed to the dining-room, where our host is waiting for us, and find the table ready for us to take our places. We are introduced to the hostess and her two daughters. The former is a French lady, and her daughters have been educated in France. This accounts for all that we see to remind us of that country. We are all seated at the board, and it is difficult to realize that we are not in Marseilles, but at Ismail on the Danube, for the *cuisine* is all French, and the dishes are all served *a la française*.

We remain at the table for fully an hour and a half, and on rising we repair to the drawing-room, where the evening is passed most pleasantly. The "Cliquot" and "Chateau Margaux" which we have had at dinner has loosened our tongues, and the conversation is lively and gay on both sides. Some play at *piquet* and *ecarte*, while others get near the piano to listen to the eldest daughter of our host, who sings most excellently. She sings us some of the most popular airs of France, and the cards are soon dropped, and the attention of every one of us turned to her. She gives us selections from *Les Huguenots*, and other operas, and then favors us with *Le Retour en Syrie*, which we request her to repeat. She gracefully complies, and finishes up with that pleasing and always acceptable Tyrolenne, *Je pense a lui*. Such an evening's entertainment was well worth coming for; and, if we were obliged to leave now, we should do so feeling well repaid for our visit. It is now time to retire, and, wishing our host and the ladies *une bonne nuit*, we all repair to our rooms and go to bed, with *Je pense a lui* ringing in our ears. It must be confessed that the most of us before we drop to sleep change that refrain into *Je pense a elle*.

Morning comes at last, and we are awakened by a servant right in the midst of

a dream which we wish could last forever. When we reach the dining-room, we find our coffee ready for us; and, as soon as we have finished sipping it, our host invites us to take a stroll with him. We agree to this proposition, and accordingly move out at once. We have but an hour to look round in, for we are then to start for the woods. Hence we have not the time necessary to get as well acquainted with this curious town and its people as we desire. It would be hard to describe even a portion of it so as to give one who is unacquainted with like places an adequate idea of its appearance. We stroll through the principal thoroughfares, and peep into shops where they seem to sell a little of everything. They are crowded, and the costumes of the passengers are as varied almost as in Constantinople. The churches are quaint edifices, in which we cannot help concluding their architects have attempted to make every conceivable style of architecture harmonize together in the same structure. We are now standing before one, and the large bell, supported by a tripod, to which it is hung in front, and forming no part of the building, is to us, at least, a novel sight. It only lacks the label "For sale" to make us think that it is exposed there for that purpose.

As we wend our way back with our host, gazing at everything and everybody, as most strangers do, we are accosted by a woman, with a child in her arms, who holds out her hand and commences to make a long appeal, which, though unintelligible to us, we have no doubt is stereotyped on her memory. Our host merely turns up his nose at her, and shakes his head as he nudges us to prevent us from giving her anything. This is the first beggar we have seen here, and we have not been called upon to make any display of our charitable dispositions since we landed. We therefore give her a shilling, and move on. But we have only taken a few steps when we become conscious that we are followed by several persons; and, looking around, we perceive the same woman, recruited by more than a score of other beggars, some on crutches, some with an arm in a sling; and a few are blind, and some partially so. We cannot imagine where they have all come from. When we gave the woman with the child our shilling, we saw none of the crowd which surrounds us now soliciting in the most plain-

tive tones our spare change. Hence they must have been watching us from out-of-the-way places, from which they came forth when they saw us give the shilling to the woman, who, no doubt, belongs to their band. We do not, however, part with any more shillings, and we get back to our host's house within the time we have allotted ourselves for our stroll. We immediately prepare to start, and find horses ready for us to mount; and, in less than ten minutes, we are in the saddle, and galloping out of the town to the northward. When we have proceeded about eight miles, we reach a large farm, where we stop to refresh ourselves with milk, for which we pay, much to the astonishment of the old farmer, triple its real value; and then, picketing our horses under an old, almost dilapidated shed, we start on foot for the woods, which are close by, and are soon out of sight among the trees. We must have been walking for more than two hours, penetrating deeper and deeper in the woods, during which we have been repeatedly assured by our huntsman that we shall soon get where we shall have plenty of game; and still we have seen nothing worth shooting. But we soon reach a clear spot, through which a brook flows, and, when the trees are not denuded of their leaves, must be most beautiful. The brook is a miniature river, whose water is as clear as crystal, and whose valley is studded with tall pines and other trees. Its course is serpentine, and here and there small rocks emerge above its surface, by which the water rushes with a gurgling sound. We, of one accord, sit down on a rock. The sun is shining brightly, and its rays, which we do not avoid, are most comforting. For a moment we forget that we are in quest of game, and engage in a pleasant conversation, which is interrupted by the huntsman, who had been reconnoitering near by, and is now stealthily retracing his steps toward us. We seize our rifles, and rise to our feet, while he gesticulates most frantically to make us keep quiet.

He soon reaches us, and explains that we must be on the alert, as there are several coming down to drink. He then advises us to take positions which he points out; and we all do so, with our rifles ready for immediate use. We are not kept waiting long, for we soon hear the grunt of the boars as they approach. They are in sight, — three of them, — but they do not seem to be in

company, as each seems to be wending his way to the brook independent of the others. At length one reaches it, and, as soon as he has drunk, he turns to retrace his steps. As he does so, he perceives one of the others, and we immediately see his bristles rise on end. By this time the second has reached the little stream, and he too "bristles up." Each looks at his antagonist just for a moment, and then blindly rushes at him, grunting most furiously. This arouses the third boar, who has now reached the scene, and he joins in the contest. They fight most fiercely. We might put bullets in all three of them, but their fighting makes us forget that we are here to shoot them. Their tusks get entangled together, and they tug at each other to extricate themselves. None of us think of shooting them, and we lean on our rifles watching the fight. The boars do not seem to have noticed our presence. They finally get disentangled, and now one of them retreats in our direction, hotly pursued by the others. They come so fast that most of us are somewhat disconcerted, and some of us are frightened enough to scamper out of their way, and one climbs a tree. But some of us have stood our ground, and, as the boars rush toward us, fire. Two fall wounded, and are finished by our guide and huntsman with a Circassian knife. The other escapes, and is soon hidden from view in the underbrush. Our next business is to make up our minds what to do with the carcasses of the two which we have killed, and we hardly know what to decide. We finally give our guide permission to do as he chooses, and he forthwith commences to dismember them. The heads, he says, are delicious, and he will save them for us to take on board of the tender, which is to take us to Galatz. He then makes of twigs, which he cuts for the purpose, what may be called litters, on which he places the pieces of the boars. It is arranged that we shall all help to carry them to the farm, where we have left our horses; and we commence retracing our steps thither. We cannot, as we proceed, help confessing to each other that, now the excitement is over, we hardly feel repaid for our trouble in coming here. For a few moments the excitement was intense, and we did enjoy it. Even he who climbed the tree says that he enjoyed it very much, especially when the boars rushed toward us so furiously

It is late when we reach the farm; and we are very glad to partake of the meal which is ready for us. One of the women cooks a piece of our game, and, in our hungry state, it is very palatable, — yes, delicious. We even relish the black bread which they give us, and almost make up our minds that this rustic meal is the most enjoyable event of the day. By the time we have all well supped, our horses are ready; and, settling liberally for the trouble we have given these rustics, we resume our places in the saddle, each with a piece of the boars in his saddle-bag. We start at a brisk canter, and arrive back in the town at dusk. In a few moments after, we are again in our host's dwelling, arranging our toilets so as to pass another evening in the drawing-room. It proves as enjoyable as the preceding one, and we are again highly gratified by the music. *Je pense a lui* rings most sweetly in our ears; and we shall never forget the beautiful girl who sings it so feelingly. As this is to be our last night, we sit up later than usual. We do not retire till past midnight; and we pass the next day, until the tender arrives, very pleasantly. We should like to stroll about the town, and get better acquainted with it; but we cannot without running the risk of detaining the tender, which we expect every moment. We therefore remain in and about the premises of our host, whose wife and daughters entertain us. Need we say that we are happy in their company? The tender does not arrive till past five o'clock P. M.; and at ten minutes past that hour we are ready to jump in the boat which awaits us. Now follow hearty shakings of hands, — we kiss the hostess once, her daughters twice, and they wave their handkerchiefs after us as we leap into the boat, which immediately shoves off. It cannot be denied that we leave with regret such as we have often experienced. For it has frequently fallen to our lot to be obliged to leave new-made friends just as we were learning to appreciate them. Some of our happiest moments have been passed in the company of friends whom we were fast learning to love, and yet whom we knew we should leave never, probably, to meet them again.

We are on the tender's deck again, afloat on the "Blue Danube," and the evening is a pleasant one. The wind is ahead. Hence the sailing vessels have their crews on the banks pulling them up like canal-boats. As the day ends, they one by one come to an anchor for the night, and the crews return on board. We feel refreshed after the agreeable rest we have had during the day. Consequently we are in good humor, and well disposed to be pleased with everything. We therefore remain on deck, chatting and smoking our Turkish tobacco for two hours after it is too dark for us to distinguish objects on shore. Some of us hum *Je pense a lui*, meaning *elle* instead of *lui*. Finally we go below, "turn in," and dream of Ismail, our host's daughters, the Moldavian farmhouse, and the boars tugging at each other with their tusks entangled together. The next day breaks; and as we wake we are greeted with a sound of trampling feet and many tongues overhead. There seems to be an incessant talking on deck in an unintelligible language; and we realize that we have reached Galatz, and are riding at anchor. The steward calls us earlier than usual. We accordingly turn out hastily, wash and dress, and enter the saloon from our staterooms, where we find roaring fires in the grates, which make it cozy, and most comfortable. Breakfast is at once served; and, after we have satisfied our appetites, we muffle ourselves up and go on deck, which we find covered by a curious crowd, thrashing their hands and stamping their feet to keep them warm, for it is cold. They incessantly talk and gesticulate; their whole jargon is unintelligible to us, and we cannot help thinking of the confusion of tongues when it was attempted to build the tower of Babel.

The number of vessels loading here is greater than usual, our captain says, and they are all busy taking in cargoes of grain, which consists chiefly of wheat, with some maize.

But we are now at the end of our journey, and we must part for the present, to meet again on the desert which bounds Jollof on the east, in West Africa, where we shall have to endure some hardship, and occasionally considerable anxiety.

## A MISTAKE, AND NO MISTAKE.

BY MARY A. ALDEN.

Mrs. Edmund Channing met her husband's brother for the first time as if she were meeting an ogre. Proverbially, he was known to shun the fairer sex, and many of his deplorable turn of mind it had not been her fate, as yet, to meet. But the clasp of a soft, firm hand, and the sound of a manly, generous voice, re-assured her: she lost at once her fears and her prudery, and met him with the winning frankness and cordiality common to her.

Whatever his opinion of womankind in general might be, Herbert Channing discovered in his brother's wife an admirable woman and a charming companion. The days and the weeks went by, and he lingered, — a welcome inmate of his brother's home, — mingling in the gayeties it offered, and sharing its many comforts. One day, however, he surprised Mrs. Channing with the announcement of an intended Western journey?

Was it possible, that, having discovered the one woman worthy of his consideration, and having found her too late, alas! he was about to flee from her presence? Was this his just punishment for so long a slighting of the sex? Nay: had he been the man to lose his heart to her, he would not have been the man to hold the place in hers that he had gained. She felt called upon to remonstrate with him.

"Think, Herbert," she said to him, "of the claims society has upon you. You have no right to bury yourself in the wilderness. A handsome, gifted, agreeable man like you ought to get married."

The words cost her a great effort. She felt as if she had thrown a thunderbolt, and sat awaiting the shock, experiencing a thrill

of sorrowful emotion at the answering look he gave her. She had learned — it might be from her husband, or from idler tongues, perhaps — something of the "Love's young dream" that had embittered his life, and she reproached herself for having jarred too harshly the chord of that tender remembrance. She had heard of the beautiful, almost angel girl who had won his heart, and who had given him her own at an early age. She had been told of some misunderstanding between them, with a making-up that came too late, wedding her to Death, and him to Misery. In all these years, she thought he must surely have enough outgrown his sorrow and remorse to find consolation in some other heart that could give him the love she felt he well deserved. She knew of such a heart, and she determined to arouse him to recognition and acceptance. So when he answered, with a quiet intensity that seemed ill to brook any opposition, "No, I never shall be married," she replied, —

"You are wrong. You shall be married, and be happy here near us. You shall not go out among the wolves and Indians and prairie fires, to be devoured, and make us miserable. Is it possible that you care nothing for Edmund or for me, or for the friends you have made among us?"

"Of course I care; but" —

"You wish to test our love by leaving us?"

"No: but a quiet life — a social life, I mean — makes me feel the need at my heart. I must seek adventure. Can you understand me?"

"Poor Herbert?"

A moment of silence followed.

"Let me find a solace for you," at length she said, in her gentlest tone, laying her hand caressingly upon his shoulder as she spoke. "I know a lady" —

Involuntarily he shrank from her touch.

"Listen to me, if you please. She is beautiful and good, and I am sure — O Herbert! O dear! what have I done?" for her husband's brother, while she was speaking, rose quickly, and left the room.

"Well, let him go. Let him be devoured — by — Indians; let him be — tomahawked — by — wolves" — And Mrs. Channing sank face downward upon the sofa, and cried. Her only consolation came later in the day, when her husband expostulated with her for trying to make a meddling match-maker of herself, when she related what had happened.

"It is my first and last attempt!" she said. And, sorry as she felt for Mr. Herbert Channing, she treated him with becoming hauteur when they met again. She would not raise a finger now to prevent his going, even if he chose to go northward to the very pole itself.

He did not at once show signs of going in any direction, however. Perhaps he lingered in hope of a reconciliation with his brother's wife, not wishing to leave her without her *bon voyage*.

"I suppose you do not care to attend the opera tonight?" he said to her, as they sat one morning at lunch.

"Not want to go to the opera! Did you ever know me to refuse? But you are the last person I should expect to ask me."

"The season is unusually successful. I knew you cared about it; and I thought before I went I would take you."

"It is truly very good of you to give me some compensating pleasure for the pain you are about to inflict," Mrs. Channing would have replied, had it not been her intention henceforth to treat his threatened departure with the greatest indifference. In present circumstances, however, she foresaw a golden opportunity which she could not forbear embracing. She thanked him demurely as she accepted his attention; yet to judge by appearances, the prospect of an evening of opera acted upon her with exhilarating effect, for she spent the afternoon in making calls, and came in to dinner in the best of spirits. With amusement, her husband noticed the reserve she had striven to practice toward his brother melt utterly

away. Had he been of a jealous disposition, he might have found it difficult to remain quietly at home, while she, dressed with incomparable elegance, attended by his brother, sat in their opera-box apparently for the sole gratification of opera-glasses.

"Let us level ours," said Mrs. Channing, raising, as she spoke, her jeweled glasses, and scanning the butterfly audience. "Tell me whom you think the most charming lady present."

"I have not to look far to discover that," he replied.

"Oh, me!" she said. "I know you admire me; but surely among so many you must find some wonder of dress and beauty superior to myself."

But he found more oddities than beauties, and ridiculed the chignons and chapeaux that met his gaze to such an extent that, in despair, Mrs. Channing allowed him to limit his attention to the opera and herself.

As they were leaving the crowded house, however, he suddenly exclaimed, —

"There! there is a face I like." And he indicated in a quiet way the direction that his eyes had taken.

"The lady with crimson flowers in her bonnet!" asked Mrs. Channing, staring about her with evident forgetfulness of propriety.

"Bonnet!" in a tone of contempt. "She does n't wear a bonnet: it would be a sin, with such a wealth of hair."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Channing, "you mean that tow-headed blonde, with pale pink eyes."

"Her eyes are like moon-lighted lakes. But do not look about you so, or you will attract her attention, for she is looking at us now."

"Ah! so strange I cannot see her! You say she has no adornment but luxuriant tresses. You do not mean that tall woman with black hair and" —

"No, no. She has passed in front of us, on the other side. You cannot see her now."

"How provoking! I should so like to see a lady that you admire without looking in my mirror."

"Then look!" he exclaimed eagerly; "for there she is, directly in front of us."

"Miss Tyrell."

"Then you know her?"

"Yes: very well. She is the lady of

whose goodness and beauty I would talk to you if you would only listen."

"Ah!"

A simple syllable, but most expressive. Mrs. Channing regretted the disclosure she had made.

"At least, I thought it was Miss Tyrell you meant. She has brown hair, and she was in front of us."

But the lips of her companion opened no further in praise or condemnation; and Mrs. Channing discreetly forbore further remarks. But she was a woman who had made willing servants of her wits, and at this crisis they did not desert her. As Mr. Herbert Channing still lingered, for entertainment, she gave an evening party. Among the invited were the Tyrells.

"You will not object," she said to him, "to a passing acquaintance with Miss Tyrell. For I cannot well omit inviting her to my party."

"I am the last person to dictate who your guests shall be," he courteously replied.

"And you will not be so rude as to absent yourself from my party on that account?"

"On no account," he replied.

Consequently, in the glow and triumph of the evening, when cheeks were flushed and eyes were radiant, Mrs. Channing presented him to Mrs. Tyrell firstly, an elderly lady, with hair turning gray, and eyes faded, but kindly; to Miss Agnes Tyrell, a lady of thirty, with soft, brown hair, somewhat quaintly dressed; and lastly, but not leastly, to the Tyrells' friend, Miss Lula Evelyn, the lady of abundant tresses, whose moonlight eyes shone softer and brighter at a nearer gazing. She was not Miss Tyrell, after all; and Mrs. Channing read the assertion in the triumphant eyes that Herbert Channing bent upon her.

"Oh the waywardness of men!" thought she; "the difficult handling they require! Oh the undoubted resemblance that they bear to donkeys!"

Outwardly, she smiled; and, moving among her guests, left her unmanageable man to the charms of his new companions.

Not that he was impolite to the lady-like Mrs. Tyrell and her gentle daughter, whom, though he might judge good, he could by no means term beautiful; but it so happened that in a little while he talked only

with Miss Evelyn; and when other friends crowded about her, and ended by seating her at the piano for general entertainment, he came very near supposing himself an injured man.

He watched her expressive face whilst she sang, and listened to her sweet, clear contralto with that longing at his heart of which he had spoken not appeased; softened, it might be, but intensified.

Mrs. Channing, casting covert glances in his direction, discerned this somewhat; and, probably, resigning her hopes for Miss Tyrell, wore a smile of extreme satisfaction, which lessened none when the gallant Mr. Herbert Channing ended the evening by escorting the Tyrells home, — at least that portion of their party which the devotion of the evening seemed to render to him as his lawful prize.

"So you admired Miss Evelyn more than Miss Tyrell," Mrs. Channing said to him the following day.

"Miss Tyrell is doubtless a lady one should be desirous to know," he replied; "but Miss Evelyn" —

"Is as worthy of your admiration as I am."

"I never thought of comparing you."

"Please never do then, for I see plainly that I should not gain by the comparison."

"You surely could not lose."

Mrs. Channing would have liked, just here, so generous was she, to have poured forth a flood of encomiums upon Miss Evelyn, but she felt it would be dangerous to the flame that she wished to cherish, and she desisted, saying, instead, —

"I am sorry you are going away. You would have so fine an opportunity of seeing more of her. The Tyrells are great friends of ours. They have just returned from abroad, and established themselves in their residence for the winter. You remember the house you admired at the corner of the street? That is theirs."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Herbert Channing. "I shall be influenced by your wishes, and remain until spring."

"My wishes! Oh, do not consider them! On second thought, it might be disagreeable to see so much of the Tyrells as you surely would if you remained."

Nevertheless, Mr. Herbert Channing insisted upon sacrificing himself. To such a degree, also, that the Tyrells became the principal people whom he met, and to



whom he offered his devotions as a social being.

"When are you going?" was Mrs. Channing's daily question; to which, at last, her hero made no response, save the revealing of a smile that lurked beneath his dark mustache, — a smile indicative of many things, a smile that Mrs. Channing liked, but that some one else had learned to love.

And now, be it known that the spotless Miss Evelyn's soul was in the greatest tribulation, and she viewed herself as a sinner among sinners; so that her sweet face was sadly troubled when she found herself one evening alone, and *tete a tete* with Herbert Channing.

He had noticed from the first moment of their acquaintance the tremor and the blush that followed every calling of her by her name, — an emotion which a longer acquaintance did not erase. This evening, she, more than ever, showed embarrassment at his greeting, and her whole manner perplexed him greatly. She was absent-minded and confused. At last she said, breaking through the rugged flow of their conversation, —

"Mr. Channing, I have a confession to make."

It must be confessed that Mr. Channing felt as if this speech had been stolen from his own lips, and as if he were, in truth, the proper person to have uttered it.

"You are startled, as you may well be," she said; "and you will be more so, I think, when you have heard what I have to say."

Nothing but her ingenuous countenance and gentle earnestness kept Mr. Channing from the terrible fear that she had divined his thoughts and fathomed his feelings toward her. Woman's rights and leap year vaguely suggested themselves, but he opened not his mouth, and inclined his ear.

"Can you forgive a deception?" she asked, in a trembling voice.

"A deception!" He had no power of speech save for reiteration.

"Yes: for I have deceived you."

"You! How?"

"I am not Lula Evelyn."

"Not — Miss — Lula" — dwelling, despite himself, lovingly upon the name — "Evelyn!"

"No: I am Agnes Tyrell."

"Agnes Tyrell!"

"Yes: my friend Miss Evelyn and I exchanged names to please a whim of Mrs. Channing. When I agreed to the play, I felt the least bit conscience-stricken; now I feel thoroughly so, — and I wonder if you ever can forgive me?"

Despite her seriousness and contrition, she could not forbear a smile at the look of absolute surprise and comic horror that overspread her companion's face.

"So you are Miss Tyrell, after all?" he found voice to say.

"Yes. Are you very sorry to know it?" she asked.

"Sorry! Well, I suppose we may keep friends?"

"I hope so; if you do not despise me."

"Despise you!"

"I wish I had not done it."

"It may be better that you did."

"Better! Why?"

"Because now my pride shall not stand in the way of my love."

"I am at a loss for your meaning."

"I mean that, had I first known you as Miss Tyrell, I never should have known you. I should have been miles and miles away from here today, and" —

"But why must you avoid me as Miss Tyrell?"

"First answer me a question, and then I will answer yours."

A question, it seemed, easy of answering, but one which delayed the explanation he had promised. He sat with his arm protectively about her, and her head upon his shoulder, as he said, —

"When Mrs. Channing first tried to tell me about you" —

"Unwilling listener?"

"Yes: I must confess it, if only to hear forgiveness from your lips. When she began to talk to me of your beauty and your goodness, with evident intentions that I should yield to both, I resolved that, much as I respected her and her opinion, and beautiful and good as you might be, I would not leave my heart thus at the disposal of another. I believed love too sacred a thing for human management. But she knew me better than I knew myself. I loved you from the moment I caught sight of your face; and I must have loved you, I think, even if I had known you were Miss Tyrell from the beginning."

"Only you would have gone away and never told me," she said softly.

"Yes," he answered: "I fear that I should."

"Then, candidly, I forgive Mrs. Channing her whim, and my conscience pangs, so tender we become to a wrong that results in what we wish."

"I do not think it so deep a wrong as my blundering pride and misunderstanding of her," he replied.

As for Mrs. Channing, she felt no remorse, and expressed none. She, however, vehemently declared that her husband's brother was a preposterous flirt and a false confidant. *Having paid the devotion of weeks to Miss Lula Evelyn, to end by en-*

*gaging himself to Agnes Tyrell; and having deceived her, from the first, by declaring his aversion to the latter, and his fondness for the former. If he spoke of happiness, she declared he was unworthy of it; but, in the secret depths of her loving, womanly soul, she rejoiced that his sorrowing heart had found, at last, a worthy solace, and secretly congratulated herself as the beneficent cause. She triumphantly declared herself to her husband as a successful match-maker; and for many a day ceased not to interest herself in the commencement of that journey which Mr. Herbert Channing as persistently refused to make.*

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## A POOR BOY'S SUCCESS.

BY CORA CHESTER.

## CHAPTER I.

"I tell you I won't stand it. I'll go for you, if you don't quit! Do you want me to lam you?"

"Boo-hoo! You leave me be. Ma, he's killing me!" rang out a shrill, boyish voice.

Ma came to the rescue from an inner room, with face flushed from bending over the wash-tub, and arms wet and red with the suds. She jerked the angry boys apart, and, rescuing the eldest, took him upon her lap, brushed the girlish curls over her bony fingers, kissed the low forehead, and wiped the pinched, red nose from which the blood was oozing.

"Is my darling hurt? Oh! he is bleeding to death!" turning with threatening air to her younger son, a sturdy, surly-looking boy of seven. "You cruel, cruel boy! is this the way you treat your angel brother? Do you not remember how the Lord punished Cain for murder? and how dared you try to take your own brother's life?"

John stood gazing at the pair with curled lip, and vouchsafed no reply. The angry scowl upon his forehead, and the bitter expression of his mouth, made his plain face almost ugly.

"Tell mamma all about it, Ikie. Did John hit my precious lamb first?"

"Boo-hoo!" bawled the lamb, as the blood streamed from his nose. "I am going to die, ma, I know I am! That cruel bully has done for me this time."

"Call me a bully, do you?" exclaimed John, squaring about, and suddenly confronting his late antagonist. "Me a bully, as saved you from being licked by Jim Sykes yesterday! No, mother: if you'll believe my word against that sickly baby, I caught him a-copying my sums that I worked on all last evening, and then he got mad, and rubbed 'em all out. A saint won't stand that, and neither will I! I'll go for him again if he dares hand 'em in!"

"O my sons, my sons!" groaned the poor, overworked mother. A hurried rap interrupted the lecture upon morality she was about to deliver, and she arose to open

the door, and admitted an elegantly attired lady.

The lady (?) was dressed in the richest of lavender silks. Heavy chain bracelets hung like shackles about her fat wrists, and her chubby hands were confined in the tightest and lightest of kids.

"Am I in the abode of my laundress?" came in an oily voice from this mass of silk and lace.

Martha Fielding's face became, if possible, more flushed; she drew down the worn calico sleeves over her bare arms, dusted a cane-bottomed chair with her apron, and jerked John from too near contact with the lady's precious robe.

"I am Martha Fielding, ma'am, at your service. I have the honor of speaking to Mrs. Jones?"

"Lud, no, woman! I've been to Europe since them days, and am married to a right handsome young man by the name of Landersdale. Mrs. Ross Landersdale. Quite an aristocratic title, a'n't it? But I did n't come to talk: though, seeing as you used to wash for us in old times, before dear Jones speculated' and got rich, it's but natural that I should like to gossip a bit. I'm inclined to be very friendly with my inferiors, and Landersdale scolds me for it; but I told him at the last Inaugural Ball, when I danced with two ginerals, that I never could stand it to be etiquetcal for any length of time."

She evidently enjoyed Martha Fielding's breathless admiration; and, as she drew herself up with suddenly remembered dignity, there was a comical mixture of freezing hauteur and good-natured familiarity in her manner.

"Lud, Fielding, it's a terrible trial to life and limb to climb these stairs. The footman wanted to come up for me, but I told him no, — your time was more precious than mine, and you could n't afford to leave the wash-tub and come into the street, even to talk to rich folks. What is your price a dozen now?"

"A dollar for fine pieces, ma'am, and I allow one white skirt to the dozen."

"Preposterous!" Mrs. Landersdale, although wealthy, shared the weakness of most rich people, and was parsimonious. "Seventy-five cents was all I ever used to pay."

"Yes, madam: but times is hard. There is the fuel, the rent, and the children. Poor folks must keep body and soul together, you know."

Mrs. Landersdale vouchsafed no reply to this, but rolled her small blue eyes to the ceiling, and seemed to be counting the flies thereon, — or rather the small white spots where the flies were not.

Ike had taken refuge in the kitchen, but now appeared radiant, after ducking his pretty face in the tin basin and rubbing it with a coarse towel. His large blue eyes were cast down behind their curtains of golden lashes, and his long chestnut curls hung in graceful confusion below his waist. He was certainly a remarkably beautiful boy, and Mrs. Landersdale, with all her failings, possessed a passionate maternal love for pretty children.

"Oh, what a duck of a boy! What a precious cherub! Will the little dear come and kiss the lady?"

Ike advanced, the blood mantling his fair cheeks and temples. He looked very little like a boy that would steal his brother's sums, fight, and tell lies. His appearance was truly angelic; and no wonder Mrs. Landersdale, who possessed very little penetration, was charmed.

"Just what the Lord has denied me, — a child. Ah, Fielding, is it possible this little sprig of aristocracy is your son?"

Martha's face reddened at her visitor's insolent tone.

"The Fieldings have good blood in their veins, ma'am, and my folks were honest New-England people. There's no aristocracy in America, and my son may be President yet, — who knows?"

"To be sure, Fielding. When universal suffering comes in, he'll get all the women's votes, and hearts too, by his beauty."

She chuckled, and drew Ike, with his coarse boots and patched trousers, upon her lap.

"My dear, will you go home with the lady, and ride a beautiful pony, and wear a velvet dress? What is my precious name?"

John made a face as Ike, looking bashfully up, caught his eye. He knew that

this saintly manner was a sham, and beauty did not influence him as it does the fairer sex.

"Isaac Vernon Fielding," answered his mother, with a glow of pardonable pride. His father's name was Vernon: he belonged to a respectable family, but was driven from home for my sake. Ah, they were proud folks! Poor soul! he was charmed by my yellow curls and blue eyes, or he'd never given up wealth for me."

She raised her faded gingham apron, and wiped away a few scalding tears.

"Yes: good blood will tell," murmured Mrs. Landersdale. "I knew that no Irish chap could wear this one's refined face. I'll tell you what I'll do, Fielding. I have no children of my own, and this child has captured me entirely by his sweet face and winning ways. If you will sign a paper resigning all claim to him in the future, and promising never to try to see him again, I'll adopt him, educate him, and leave him comfortably well off. Come, now, that's an offer you won't get every day."

Martha Fielding's face grew white at this proposition. What! part with her pet lamb? sell her child for gold?

Then ambition whispered, —

"Was not this a golden opportunity for her boy? — wealth, luxury, the best of clothes, a carriage to ride in, and no work to soil his pretty hands. If she made this sacrifice, would he not reward her for it all when he grew up to be a rich, honored man?"

No good angel whispered in her ear that he might live to be ashamed of his humble mother: her faith in him was infinite.

She was ignorant, worshiped what gold could buy, and would have cut out her heart if her idol could have been benefited thereby. There was one terrible struggle with her mother-love, then the tempter triumphed, and she gave the son, whose soul should have been her most precious responsibility, into the hands of a worldly-minded, coarse woman, who believed that money was the open sesame to even the gate of heaven itself.

"I appreciate the honor done us, ma'am," in a husky voice; "but it's hard, the terms you make. If I could only see my darling once or twice a year."

"Impossible, my good woman!" with a decided, ugly shake of the head; "impossible! You must give him up entirely, or

not at all. I'll have no vulgar relatives claiming my pet. He shall be all Landersdale, and nothing coarse must come near him to spoil his future. Vernon Landersdale! I will have Bishop Stafford christen him at once. How do you like the name, my dear?"

Isaac was only eight years old, but he was sharp enough to comprehend the lady's meaning.

"I love you already, ma'am, and, if ma will let me, I'll go live with you."

"That is a precious lamb. Come, now, Fielding, be sensible."

"Well," with one last struggle between love and expediency, "take him, ma'am." Then, with a burst of tears, "Go now. I know it's for my darling's good; but, if you don't take him right off, I can never, never part with him!"

"We must n't have a scene, Fielding. Kiss your boy, and then we will go at once. I will get my lawyer to draw up the papers, and come here tomorrow; and, if you decide to take it quietly, I may give you a little something too. Of course you must give up all idea of washing for me; for, though I'd like to help you a bit, it might cause the servants to make scurrilous remarks about Vernon's birth."

The mother clasped her son in her arms for the last time, and pressed burning kisses upon his lips; but *his eyes were dry as he slipped from her caresses with a peevish cry.*

John stood by while this scene was transpiring, scarcely realizing what had happened. As Ike was about to leave, he ran forward, and caught his brother's hand.

"Good-by, Ike. Don't hold a grudge, do you? I don't; and I think it's bully you are goine to live in a big house and have a swell time!"

Mrs. Landersdale paused at the head of the creaking stairs, and looked at John through a pair of gold eye-glasses she sometimes affected when she desired to appear particularly awful.

"And who is this vulgar little rough, may I ask?"

"Oh, this is John, my youngest, ma'am. A good enough boy, but he will pick up gutter talk, you know."

There settled upon Mrs. Landersdale's features an expression which betokened her extreme annoyance.

"Dear, dear! a coarse brother to follow

my pet through the world, and spoil his prospects! But he sha'n't do it! no, sir!" turning decidedly toward John, who had grown very warm and red. "You must n't com', sneaking about *my* house, for I won't have it! Do you hear?"

"I'll be darned, old lady, if I don't keep clear of the whole raft of you!"

"Old!" exclaimed the horrified Mrs. Landersdale, taking the boy by the collar and commencing to shake him. "You little brute! how dare you?"

Then she suddenly remembered her long-suffering dignity, relaxed her grasp, and floated down-stairs as gracefully as her two hundred pounds avoirdupois would allow.

Ike followed, but in passing stepped upon John's toes, and whispered with an insolent sneer, —

"You'll never lam me again, you gutter-snipe! I'll pay you off some day yet!"

Then, as Mrs. Landersdale turned, the sneaking, villanous expression left his face, and a bright smile came in its stead.

"Vernon, are you coming?"

"Yes, ma'am. I'll hurry. Oh! am I going to ride in that beautiful crimson carriage? How good and sweet you are!"

Martha and John watched through the steaming window the footman, all in gray livery and brass buttons, descend from his perch and open the door for *their* Ike. Yes, and Ike sank back in the crimson cushions beside Mrs. Landersdale as if he was to the manner born, and never even gave one glance up at the heart-broken mother, who was leaning out of the window now that she might catch a last glimpse of the flying wheels and shining horses.

"Poor darling!" she sighed, as her tears fell hot and fast into the wash-tub. "How sweet he looked with those blue eyes and golden curls all wrapped up in the robes! I pray God he may be happy, and that his poor mother's heart won't break."

The tears blinded her again, she left the clothes in the suds, leaned her head upon the table, and gave full vent to her grief.

## CHAPTER II.

A sunny day in May, with a spring freshness in the air. Central Park wore a gala aspect this Saturday afternoon, and John Fielding, as he danced about the Zoological Garden, fed the deer with peanuts, and made faces at the monkeys, wore as happy

a fiasco as any of the delicate little scions of aristocracy out taking their constitutionals with their nurses.

There was no envy in his heart as he gave these favorites of Fortune a passing glance now and then. He curled his lip contemptuously as he met boys of his own age with long curls, peevish voices, and puny limbs.

"What a precious set!" he mused: "they are so pretty, it's a pity they a'n't all girls. Jingo! if there don't go a regular beauty, though! Why, it is a little angel, I guess."

The little creature who had attracted his attention was dressed in the height of fashion. Her white embroidered skirts barely touched her knees, and her tiny feet were encased in the most impossible-looking kid boots. Her long yellow hair, caught by a ribbon, fell over her blue sash, and the large hazel eyes were upturned to her companion, — a pleasant-looking gentleman of thirty or thereabouts.

"O uncle! do look at this sweet little deer! Can't I feed him some candy?"

Her uncle smiled indulgently down upon the pretty vision. His dark eyes, long side-whiskers, and exquisite toilet made a pleasant exterior; but the weak mouth, half hidden by a tawny mustache, and low, slightly receding forehead, betokened to a shrewd observer a lack of firmness, and a morality that might give way under the strain of great temptation.

"No, Maudie: I would n't venture too near the animals. Come up with me, pet, and see the swans; then you can run round, while I smoke this cigar."

She left rather reluctantly, and watched our hero half-enviously as he patted a timid-looking fawn upon the head.

"Oh, look, look, uncle! The dear little toad is n't a bit afraid of that boy. He looks like a kind, good boy: may n't I speak to him?"

"No, no, child: what would auntie say? Don't be ridiculous, Maudie, and come on."

She took his hand again, and danced away up the path, but not until she had thrown John two or three candy hearts. He picked them up, and stood gazing after her in a dazed sort of way. They were going up to visit the swans: why might not he go too?

He answered the question satisfactorily for himself by taking another path toward the lake, and was rewarded when he reached

the spot by catching sight of the object of his search. The gentleman was seated upon a bench, lost in a paper, and Maudie ran along the water's edge, throwing pebbles into the sparkling lake.

John seated himself upon a rock, and watched the child as the sunlight danced in her long curls and lighted up her mischievous brown eyes. A beautiful white swan was sailing majestically on the blue waters, and she was using every childish wile to induce him to come to shore.

"You dear, sweet little bird!" John heard her whisper, "won't you come to Maudie? She's got candy for you, and will eat it all up if you don't hurry."

Then she clapped her tiny hands, as the swan, moved by her persuasive powers, no doubt, came with a slow, graceful movement toward the spot where she stood.

She ran to the edge of the lake, until the water washed against her blue boots, and, in her eagerness to touch the bird's white feathers, stood upon tip-toe, and held out both hands, forgetful of the danger.

John started as he saw her reach forward over the deep water, but he was too late. He heard a childish shriek of terror, then two brown eyes were lifted imploringly toward him, two tiny hands raised in a mute appeal for rescue, and a white dress fast sinking from view was all he could see of Maudie.

Before her uncle, roused from his paper by her scream, could reach the lake, John had thrown off coat and vest, and was diving for the little girl.

He was athletic, strong for his age, and, thanks to his education, a splendid swimmer; so, before many minutes had elapsed, Maudie was in her uncle's arms, wet and pale from the dousing and scare, but none the worse for her bath.

"Why, darling! what a careless wretch I was, to be sure! Why, it is a miracle you were n't drowned! Where is the boy?"

John had already gone from sight, and was wringing out his wet hair and replacing coat and vest.

"He went behind that tree, uncle; and he is the one you would n't let me speak to. He is a dear, good boy, though, but he's dreadful poor," in a confidential whisper, "for he a'n't got no good clothes, and his trousers are all patched!"

The gentleman went behind the tree indicated, and found John, who blushed and

looked foolish enough when he saw he was discovered.

"My good boy," in a lofty, condescending tone, "you have done a very brave act, and of course you must be duly rewarded. I am going to call a cab, and you can accompany us home; then we'll see what can be done for you."

"O sir!" began John, in an expostulating voice; but the gentleman did not heed him.

He took Maudie in his arms, walked down the road, and ordered John to follow. They were near the entrance to the Park, when an elegant-looking turnout passed them, a boy's head was thrust out of the carriage, and a shrill voice cried, —

"I say, Johnson, you here, pull up your horses! There's Uncle Ross and Maud."

Johnson, in obedience to the polite command, accordingly pulled up, and Mrs. Landersdale herself leaned out of the carriage.

"What under heaven, Landersdale, are you doing in the Park on foot this time of day? — and Saturday, too! You'll mortify me to death yet! And I just passed General Gun's family and the Peterses. Lud! I knew that Peters gal saw you, for every one knows where her heart has flown to, and she craned that long neck of hers away out of the carriage to see you. It is perfectly disgusting, these American manners! I declare, give me foreign women for refinement!"

Mr. Ross Landersdale echoed the last sentiment fervently, and his brow flushed with embarrassment.

"Do not get heated, madam, I beg. If you only had the sense to see it, I keep your position in society for you, and without me all your money could n't do it. Maudie has met with an accident, and of course will drive home with you. This brave boy here saved her life, and he can get up with the coachman and go with us. I mean to give him something for his courage."

Mrs. Landersdale's eyes fell upon John, who was striving to get out of sight.

"No, sir-ee, Landersdale! it sha'n't be done! I told that boy more than a year ago to keep out of my sight; and if he is sneaking around for my money, he won't get none of it. He a'n't too good to foot it home; and perhaps it will be a lesson to him in the future not to hang onto the skirts of rich folks. I'll let you know that this is *my* carriage, and *my* money keeps it,

Landersdale! You can get in here with Maud; and, Verne," turning to a dainty-looking bundle of blue velvet half hidden in the carriage wraps, "you can set with Johnson and drive the horses home. I know that will please you. Don't look at that boy, or I'll not buy the velocipede I promised you."

Ross Landersdale felt absently in his pockets, and looked yearningly toward John; but perhaps a wholesome fear of his wife restrained him from giving a large sum, or caution may have whispered that his month's allowance was already overdrawn. At any rate he drew out a fifty-cent bill, and, flushing painfully, held it toward John.

"Here, boy! I am sorry for you, and it is deuced hard that I can't do more; but it is too much of an effort to oppose the powers that be! God bless you! and good-by."

John drew back from the proffered gift, and, with his scornful gray eyes fixed full upon Mrs. Landersdale's face, exclaimed, —

"No, sir! I would n't take one cent of that old she-bear's money, not if I was dying! Keep your money, and give it to a beggar that needs it! I don't want your stamps."

He was turning away with curled lip, when Maudie, who had slipped from her uncle's arms, ran toward him, and caught him by the arm.

"Dear, good little boy! you sha'n't go! I want you to come home with me and ride my beautiful pony. I hate that Vernel! He pinches me and pulls my hair; but you won't, I know. He is awful strong, but I guess you could fight him, could n't you?"

"Fight him? I rather think so!" with a contemptuous gaze up at Verne, who was already seated beside Johnson, kicking that much-enduring lackey's shins, and tickling his horses with the long whip. "I'd go for him, I guess, if he was bully enough to hurt one golden hair of your pretty head!"

"Maud!" shouted Mrs. Landersdale from the carriage, "come here this instant! What dirty talk is that little rough telling you? Come here, I say!"

"Well," exclaimed Maud, "I am going to kiss you good-by, little boy, anyhow."

Then standing on tip-toe, to Mrs. Landersdale's horror, she pressed a kiss upon the boy's brown cheek.

"And you must take this too; and when

I get big, I'll give you lots and lots of money. Uncle Ross says I'm rich; so *her* money did n't buy this, you know."

She loosened a tiny chain from her throat, and placed a handsome blue locket in John's hand.

"No, no, little girl: I must n't take this. It is worth money."

But Maud had left him, and the carriage was already rolling down Fifth Avenue.

John ran after it for some distance, then ceased his efforts, and wended his way homeward, with the resolve to return the trinket should he ever meet any of the Landersdales again.

### CHAPTER III.

A summer haze over the blue waters of the Hudson, and a June warmth and brightness in the air. Sail-boat and steamer cut through the sparkling waves, throwing the dashing spray far behind, and the "Vibbard" bore down past Newburgh with a holiday aspect quite in contrast to the solemn-looking canal-boats alongside being towed with their burdens down the river.

On the upper-deck of the steamer, keeping time to the "Mabel Waltzes" with her tiny foot, sat a young lady of perhaps eighteen. Her dark eyes flashed with suppressed gayety, and she evidently, as she listened to the music, longed for one whirl down the long deck.

"Don't your feet ache, Maud?" inquired a dark-eyed, stylish girl who stood near looking for "Washington's Headquarters" through a long glass. "Mine do; and I should just delight to clear off these tiresome people and jump around to my heart's content. Wait till we get there, though, and then there won't be any lack of beaux and dancing, I guess. Max says the cadets are gay fellows, and so handsome! I do wish the old 'Vibbard' would hurry up; and I'd admire to know how much longer it will take to get there."

Miss Flo Van Ruyter was from Boston, and "admitted to know" a great many things.

"Don't be so absurd, Flo! But if the cadets are so fascinating, I mean to flirt with that brother of yours,—that is, if he is heart-free, of course."

"Umph! old lady, you're not going to do anything of the sort. Mr. Verne is as jealous as a Turk, and you will get mighty little fun while he is around."

"Who is taking my name in vain?" inquired a foppish-looking youth, in tourist costume, with the least possible drawl.

He held quantities of novels, wraps, and satchels, and seemed to be buried behind a mass of flesh and silk he was trying in vain to support upon his puny arm.

"Is Miss Flo going to annihilate me with those killing eyes? or has Maud determined to break my heart, and desert me for a red-cheeked, tight-laced cadet?"

"You sha'n't say one word against the cadets, Verne Landersdale, for my brother is one, and some of the noblest men in our country come from their ranks."

"Granted, Miss Flo; and the conquering hero of your destiny will be found there also, I dare say."

"I don't know but that he may," blushed Flo. "Max has a splendid friend who graduates this year and delivers the valedictory. My brother says he is one fellow in a thousand, and will adorn any position. I mean to try my powers of pleasing upon him,—though he has the reputation of being a woman-hater, and I've never dealt with any of that species of the *genus homo* before. I shall have to adopt new tactics, I fear."

"You are all-conquering in whatever role you choose to assume," simpered Verne. "Mother, here is a seat; and I will hold your parasol for you."

"Thanks, my dear. Those stairs are so fearful to mount. I declare, it takes away all the pleasure of the beautiful Hudson. I wonder they don't have elevators."

"They have them at the bar, madam," laughed Verne. "You can get a 'leetle elevated' by just stepping down-stairs and taking a glass or two."

"Ha, ha! what wit the boy has! Verne, get that camp-stool, and sit beside me, and then hand me your glass. I do enjoy this scenery so much: there's nothing in Europe half so superb. Ah! give me my native land, my dears," turning with a condescending smile toward the two girls. "Have you ever been abroad, Miss Van Ruyter?"

"No, madam; but pa is going to take us next year."

"That is well, my dear: it gives such a style and pose to a girl's manners. When Verne and Maud get married, I mean to take them abroad with me."

Verne smiled delightedly, and turned to look at Maud, who blushed, pouted, and pulled Frisky's ears until that poor little



dog, curled away in her lap, awoke, and yelled for mercy.

Verne ran for a stool, and in his haste nearly upset a shabby-looking woman in black who was leaning forward in her chair gazing wildly at Mrs. Landersdale and party.

"Ah, pardon me, my good woman!" with an exaggerated, pert bow; "but—aw—really, you must n't get in people's way, you know."

A very ordinary speech, and one to be looked for from such a youth; but it caused tears to fall from the faded blue eyes of the "good woman" addressed, and she hastened to draw her heavy veil down over her pale face with trembling fingers. She listened with intense interest to the light conversation of the party.

"Who is this admirable Crichton, Flo?" asked Maud, with as much interest as her high-bred, languid manners would allow. "One of your Boston prodigies, no doubt. I notice that all our smart men and women do come from the Hub, by the way."

"We will sue you for libel, Maud!" cried Verne, with the least possible annoyance in his tone. "You don't give us New Yorkers credit for good brains, and it's deused hard, you know."

"Well, I should say that *you* are not overburdened," laughed Maud, with a contemptuous little shrug of her shoulders. She snubbed poor Verne at times dreadfully, but he dutifully submitted, and rarely resented.

"Verne has enough heart to make up the deficiency, if there is any," Mrs. Landersdale hastened to interrupt. She scented a quarrel in the air, and was politic enough to wish to avoid it.

"Here is Cornwall already, and we will be there in no time. Is your brother's friend of high birth, Miss Van Ruyter?" hastening to renew the subject. "Though of course one so fastidious as Max Van Ruyter would choose no one low for a friend."

"That is the very cream of the affair," Flo answered, with a touch of satire. "Now your high-bred people, Mrs. Landersdale, would n't approve of him, of course; but we Van Ruyters are democratic enough to admire such ability. He is of very humble birth, was brought up in a tenement, educated in our common schools, and when your New-York senator threw

open his appointment of the West-Point cadetship to the pupils of the public schools, Max's friend came out number one, and justifies the selection by graduating this year one of the first in his class. High birth is all very well, but what does it amount to without intellect?"

"To be sure," acquiesced Maud. "I should like to meet your brother's friend, get acquainted, and see if I could rid myself of some of the exclusive notions that have been drilled into me since childhood. I really do believe I shall do something dreadful some day,—run away and marry the barber, or turn waiting-maid to somebody or other."

Mrs. Landersdale looked annoyed.

"Don't be so eccentric, Maud. It really is n't becoming, and savors of strong-mindedism. Do try and be like other people."

"Thanks, auntie; but you have brought Verne up so exactly after your pattern of excellence that one such prodigy should content you. He makes such a splendid cockney, or I would advise him to give West Point the benefit of his presence. He might come in contact with low-born people there, though, who could not appreciate his intellect."

Maud knew, in the depths of her wicked heart, that Verne Landersdale had applied for a cadetship, but had failed to pass the necessary examination creditably, and even Mrs. Landersdale's money could not buy it for him. So he had contented himself with a seat in Mr. Landersdale's office, and honored Wall Street with his presence once a week or so.

Verne's face flushed scarlet, and he pretended to be gazing attentively at a passing boat. Maud, whose heart was good, regretted her remark as soon as made, and hastened to add,—

"But Verne is a good fellow, and is used to my cross fits. Come, sit by me, Verne, and share some of these delicious bon-bons. You have provided for my comfort so generously that you must eat at least a few of them."

Verne obediently brought his low seat close to her side, and seemed perfectly happy as he toyed with Frisky's ears, and fed that spoiled pet some of the most tempting of the confits. The rest of the journey passed amicably away, but Maud was not sorry when the boat veered to shore, the plank was thrown down, and "West

Point!" was shouted out from the deck below.

Two fine-looking cadets, in their neat gray uniforms, stood upon the wharf, and one waved his handkerchief at sight of Flo.

"Oh, it's Max!" with an ecstatic little shriek. "Do hurry, dear Mrs. Landersdale, for I am so crazy I can't wait."

Flo was first over the plank, was clasped in her brother's arms, and given a right soldierly salute upon her red cheek. But Max's distinguished-looking friend, whom Flo had already surrendered to at discretion, passed her by without even a glance, and clasped the shabby-looking woman in black, who had closely followed her, to his heart. The one eager, tenderly whispered word, "Mother," told the relationship which bound them together.

"My dear son, how very proud I am!" whispered the mother; "but, O John!" in so low a voice that none other heard, "Isaac is on board, and I thought my heart would break when he did n't know his own mother. Poor lamb! though how should he remember me? I am sure his heart is good, and, if he knew the truth, he would claim me before all his proud friends. But I do not mean to tell him, John. I won't ruin his prospects now, after keeping silence all these miserable years."

John looked after his brother with a half-contemptuous, half-amused smile, as Verne, his slight form almost lost to view behind Mrs. Landersdale's voluminous skirts, staggered along under a weight of shawls and bags.

"No matter, mother mine. Is n't one son, and such a devoted one, enough for your ladyship? You look pale," with a pained, anxious glance at her thin face. "The city has pulled you down this warm weather, but this river air will refresh you, I'll warrant. I will take you up to Roe's; and those people will probably engage rooms at Cozzen's, unless they particularly desire the company of us cadets."

#### CHAPTER IV.

Two evenings later, John Fielding's chum, Max Van Ruyter, presented him to his sister Flo, and her friend, Miss Maud Pelham. It was in the parlor of Roe's Hotel, and although Flo was attired in the most bewitching of her evening toilets, and smiled sweetly upon her intended victim,

John merely acknowledged the introduction with a few commonplace words, and turned to Maud, whose every look and gesture he watched with a scrutiny which became almost rude. Maud blushed under it, and with a half-saucy laugh inquired, —

"Do I resemble any of your dear five hundred lady friends, Mr. Fielding? or am I unfortunate enough to appear peculiar in any way?"

"I—I beg pardon," stammered John, blushing to the roots of his hair. "I have been very rude in my regards, but, believe me, I intended nothing uncomplimentary. You do indeed remind me of some one, Miss Pelham, some one whom I parted from long years ago, and never hoped to meet again."

"You talk like an octogenarian!" exclaimed Flo. "How many love affairs have you had, Mr. Fielding, since you left off long clothes? You cadets are fearful lady-killers, report says."

"Report is most unkind then, Miss Van Ruyter," with a grave smile and an evident effort to tear his attention from Maud. "We are the most tender-hearted of men, and would lay down our lives willingly for any woman."

"Oh, I detest generalisms!" with a pretty shrug of the white shoulders. "Anything but this universal gallantry. Here comes Mr. Ford for that *deux temps* I promised him. *Au revoir.*"

She left them together, with a feeling of chagrin at her own disappointment.

"Always the way," she mused. "Everything goes contrary with me, and I go contrary with everybody. He is indifferent and hateful, and I don't see how Max can think him so splendid."

Max passed her just then, and whispered teasingly in her ear, as he noted the frown upon her forehead, —

"I'll tell Fielding to beware, Sis, or he may get stabbed for his non-appreciativeness. 'Earth holds no fury like a woman scorned.'"

John Fielding and Maud were left together, and Maud felt a sense of embarrassment, new as it was strange, in his presence. Why should this comparative stranger possess such power over her that she should blush when he gazed down at her with his quiet eyes, and stammer at some chance remark of his as to the number of guests and their appearance?

John Fielding had no wish to be pre-

sented to Mrs. Landersdale, and that lady watched him complacently as he promenade with Maud Pelham, never dreaming of his true identity. As he walked up and down the moon-lighted veranda, he grew more and more deeply interested in the girl whom he had recognized as the little "Maudie" of years ago. Maud never dreamed that he was the "dear, good boy" her childish heart had pined in those old days, and as her embarrassment wore off she chatted quite freely with him about her past life. They were making great strides that first evening toward a love which would in time become the ruling passion of both their lives.

The days flew by, and every available moment John spent by Maud's side. Mrs. Landersdale began to grow alarmed at this increasing intimacy, and Verne looked on in jealous dismay.

John offered his arm one evening after they had tired of dancing, drew Maud's burnous over her shoulders, and walked out upon the veranda. They finally descended the steps, and wandered together down "Flirtation Walk."

"I wonder how this place ever got so bad a name?" laughed Maud, for want of something better to say.

"I suppose the poor cadets have had their tender hearts broken here by fair coquettes ever since the old academy has stood."

"More likely the fault lies with your sex, Mr. Fielding. Men are much more dangerous flirts than women, because they do not feel so strongly, and have less pity upon their victims."

"Preposterous, Miss Pelham! Who ever heard of a lady having a particle of pity in her flinty heart? Why, you would dress as bewitchingly, and give as dangerously sweet glances, if you knew that one of us was dying for love of you. Yes, and rather enjoy the knowledge too."

They had wandered from the path now, and stood beneath the archway of a vast tree. Below them, the Hudson sparkled in the moonlight, and dashed against the shore. John felt that the crisis of his life had come: he must know his fate then, or die. He toyed nervously with his watch-chain, and thought in vain for some words in which to tell the high-born girl beside him his hopes and fears.

Maud's eye fell upon a tiny blue locket

suspended from his watch-chain, and, with some curiosity, she bent to examine it. He would have hid it from view, but it was too late. He saw that she had recognized it, and as he took both hands in his, her pretty face grew red and white by turns.

"Do you remember the locket little 'Maudie' gave me years ago? I have cherished it ever since, and remembered those wonderful eyes of hers upon our first meeting."

"And you are the little boy who saved my life," murmured Maud, between laughter and tears. "No wonder that I have liked you so well from the first." She paused, not knowing how to express her gratitude, and an embarrassed silence ensued.

John suddenly took her in his arms and pressed a kiss upon her golden hair.

"I know I ought not to, Maud, but I can bear this suspense no longer. As a poor, lonely boy, I have loved you for years; as a man, I love you ten thousand times better tonight. O Maud, Maud! tell me you have not been flirting with me all these days! Tell me that I may love you, and that you care a little for me."

She lifted her head at his passionate entreaty, but her long lashes hid the eyes she did not dare to raise to his. Her heart beat fast, and she could not tell him the truth. She could not bear to see those grave, honest eyes she loved turn from her with scorn. She clenched her hands spasmodically, and John began to take courage from her silence.

"Perhaps I have taken an unwarrantable liberty? If I have displeased, I beg for forgiveness. I can bear anything but suspense, darling. Let me look in your eyes and read the truth there."

She lifted those eyes, swimming in tears, to his. Then in a hesitating, trembling voice, whose every utterance seemed to choke her, —

"You have mistaken my manner, Mr. Fielding. I am engaged to Verne Landersdale, and can be nothing to you in the future. Let me go."

Her voice ended in a sob, but she need not have added the last words. He made no effort to hold her, but almost pushed her from him, and dropped his arms to his side.

"You have acted a falsehood, Maud Pelham! Your woman's heart, filled with a woman's tender pity, must have told you ere

this that my very life and soul were yours. Well, let it go. You are no better and no worse than the rest of your sex. I cherished a dream that one true girl could be found in your artificial high society, but I have awakened. Go, boast of your flirtation, and when you recount your conquests add John Fielding's name to your list of victims if you like."

Maud heard him through with dumb agony. She stood with bowed head, and did not try to arrest his scorn, but his last words stung her.

"O John, John! take back your cruel words, or you will kill me!"

She clung to his arm, and the hard lines about his mouth softened a little. Her bowed head and trembling voice betrayed her love, and a supreme pity for her weakness filled his heart. This girl was his by the divine right of love. Should he allow the brother who had scorned and triumphed over him all these years to triumph over him now, and rob him of the one woman he could ever love? There was a terrible struggle as Maud, forgetful of her promise, clung to him. Then honor triumphed, and with bitter self-renunciation he bent and loosened her clasp from his arm.

"I forgive you, Maud, and take back my hasty words. They were spoken in anger. Farewell, and God forever bless you! We may meet again, but only as strangers."

They had neared the hotel now. He bent, pressed one last kiss upon her brow, and Maud was left alone.

## CHAPTER V.

"Who is that fine-looking cadet?" inquired Mrs. Landersdale of a soldierly-looking old gentleman bending over her chair. John Fielding had entered the parlor, and stood for one moment near the doorway.

There had never dawned upon Mrs. Landersdale a suspicion of the truth, and her companion's answer was as much of a shock to her as the explosion of a shell could have been.

"His name is John Fielding, madam. He is a fine fellow from New York City, and your State has reason to be proud of her cadet. I am glad to see that in our republic brains are being sent to West Point, and that even money cannot always buy a commission here."

Mrs. Landersdale's face became livid.

"What! John Fielding! Is it possible? And my Maud has been flying around with him here as if he was the biggest noble in the land. Dear, dear! how humiliating! What will dear Verne say?"

She communicated the news to Verne a few moments later. His pale face grew a trifle paler, and he fixed upon John anything but a friendly glance.

"Well, I knew his name was Fielding, but I never dreamed he could be a relative of mine. The fellow must have some pluck, or he'd have claimed us before this. I don't want to be mortified before all these people as to my birth at this late day, so I don't care how soon we pull up stakes and leave West Point."

"Of course, a very proper pride to show, my son. Maud's flirtation with him mortifies me most to death! If she has a fancy for him though, we could soon cure her by telling her the truth."

"Tell her the truth? Never!" exclaimed Verne, biting his pale lips till the blood came. "Maud Pelham would break with me at once if she knew that my mother was a common washerwoman. Her pride is worse than ours, and she has a deuced high family to back her, and lots of cash beside!"

"That is true," acquiesced Mrs. Landersdale quietly. "Well, don't get heated over it, Verne. Landersdale and Maud both think you are my nephew, and they know I have adopted you and love you as my own son. There is no need to undeceive them, for, as you say, Landersdale and his family are as proud as Lucifer, if he hasn't one red cent to scratch against another."

The next afternoon Mrs. Landersdale and party drove over from Cozzen's to witness the parade. Verne was seated in his dog-cart, endeavoring to manage a high-spirited span, with an indifference and nonchalance he was far from feeling.

Johnson, now grown gray in Mrs. Landersdale's service, had uttered a word of warning before harnessing up.

"Had n't ye better be after taking the other span, Mr. Verne? These critters feel mighty ticklish today, and the music may rouse 'em up a bit."

"Nonsense, Johnson! I am perfectly competent to manage them. The grays are only fit to draw the old lady around, and I want some spirit in a span I drive. You

might as well harness up a couple of cows as those octogenarians!"

Mr. Verne had a tendency toward jockeyism, and his eyes sparkled with a genuine love of the turf as the splendid creatures came from the stable tossing their heads and pawing the ground with impatience. Their eyes flashed and the blood seemed fairly bursting through the large veins which coursed their way along their slender necks.

"Firefly seems a trifle uneasy. Is her foot all right?"

"Ah, sirrah, and it's not the foot at all, at all, that ails the old gal. She's a devil of a temper of her own!"

Not very re-assuring to Verne, who began to have doubts of his own ability. He was too proud to acknowledge his fears now, however, mounted the box and followed Mrs. Landersdale's carriage along the road as if no such thing as danger existed in the world.

They behaved quietly enough when they reached the parade ground, and only by the champing of Firefly's bit and her dilating nostrils could a spectator tell of the uneasy spirit within her.

Verne sat upon his high seat, with a long blue veil tied around his hat, and a feeling of conscious pride filled him as he saw that no horses on the ground could compare with his, and that several of his lady friends were gazing at him with evident admiration.

He pulled his sickly mustache, held the reins tightly, and enjoyed the triumph of the hour.

But, alas! it was short-lived! During the beating of the drums Firefly pricked up her ears and kept time to the music. As the parade proceeded she became more frightened and restive, and, finally, when the loud boom of the evening gun thundered through the air both horses burst from their driver's control and dashed through the crowd. There was a mad rushing and screaming as they flew by, and Verne was being hurried with horrible speed toward the high bluffs over the river.

"The precipice!" shrieked Mrs. Landersdale. "My God! Will no one save my boy? He will be killed!"

But the rest of the spectators saw what her fright had blinded her to. A single cadet, stationed as sentinel near the river, had sprung from his post and stood calmly awaiting the coming of the now maddened

animals. Regardless of the fearful risk to himself, he leaped for their mouths, turned their wild career aside, and finally stopped them with his giant strength. They stood still with drooping heads, trembling with fear and dripping with perspiration; and John Fielding patted their necks and soothed them by his touch. Verne, pale with fright and embarrassment, when he learned who his rescuer was, was stammering out his thanks.

"It was deused brave of you, old boy, to go for me in that handsome style, and I appreciate it, by George, I do! We can't throw off all restraint here, though, and appear as friendly as I should like, because it would make it deused awkward for Mrs. Landersdale, you know, and we would both hate to hear the seven days' wonder the truth would create. But I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I'll never forget it, never!"

"Enough said, Mr. Landersdale," with a mocking emphasis on the word. "If our true relationship were published to the world the recital would be as humiliating to my pride as to yours. I deserve no thanks for doing my duty, and wish none."

Both had failed to notice, in their heat, a woman, who, regardless of the stare of the spectators and the curiosity she excited, had left the crowd and was running toward the spot where they stood. Before Verne could prevent it, had he desired, she had clasped him about the neck and kissed him again and again.

"My darling boy, you are saved! Oh, I thought of you as a mangled corpse down on the rocks, and never hoped to hear your dear lips' whisper 'mother' just once as they did in the old happy days. Isaac, my darling, darling son!"

Verne blushed scarlet with mortification as he saw some of his fashionable friends watching them curiously from a distance. Almost involuntarily and without thought he pushed her from him; but that movement, slight though it was, was like a sword thrust through his mother's heart.

"I am all right, not a hair of my precious head hurt. Don't snivel so, old lady, all those people are watching us. It's deused hard for a fellow to know how to act, anyway," looking around wildly for some hope of escape. "Of course I love you as well as ever, but it won't do to let everybody know. It will ruin my prospects! Oh,

what will Maud say when she finds the whole miserable truth out?"

He broke down here and ended with a fretful whine.

"He is ashamed of me," wailed the poor, heart-broken woman, "ashamed of the mother that worked away her life for him and worshiped the very ground his baby feet trod. I see I have sinned; but, O God, my punishment is hard—hard!"

As she reeled and fell Verne started forward with tardy self-reproach, but John, with sparkling eyes and white face, pushed him away and with no gentle hand.

"Do not dare to pollute our mother by a touch of your finger, Verne Landersdale! May God deal with you as you have dealt with her this day!"

He crouched away from his brother's fierce wrath and covered his face with both hands as John bore his insensible burden up the path toward the hotel.

"Verne Landersdale," exclaimed a clear voice close by his side, "arouse yourself, if you can, and listen to the girl who denounces you now, as your brother did but a moment ago. I have heard all, and although I only partially comprehend the truth I know that the craven, who disowns his own mother, because of her poverty and humble origin, can never make such a woman as Maud Pelham happy! If you had boldly confessed the truth of your birth I could have loved you for your courage, now I despise and detest you! Take your ring, and not for the wealth of the Indies will I ever renew our engagement in the future. It is over now and forever!"

She paused and walked hurriedly away as Mrs. Landersdale and a party of friends hastened to Verne's side.

Verne raised his pale face and tried to appear natural, but the effort was too great. He made some laughing reply to a young lady's sally, then the forced smile left his face and he sank insensible into his adopted mother's arms.

## CHAPTER VI.

Five years later the same moon shone down upon "Flirtation Walk," but only a solitary man wended his lonely way along the path. Where was the woman he had loved so dearly and who had walked the familiar way with him so many times with her small hand upon his arm and her perfumed hair brushing his shoulder?

John Fielding asked himself the question with a wild yearning for her presence that night. He had come back to these familiar scenes for the first time since those old summer days of long ago, and Maud's voice seemed to be sighing in the breeze and Maud's presence pervaded the air.

"One would think the place were haunted," he muttered, with clenched teeth. "But it is with memories sweet as they are bitter. Then it was summer. The leaves have come and gone five times since, and are falling and dying now with the dying year. O Maud, Maud!"

He had called the name aloud; and a wild bird awoke on its perch, and answered him. His mind was busy recalling her every look and gesture, and a little song she had often sung in those first happy days came back to him.

"O paths down which her little feet have wandered!

Ye hold the sunshine yet:

O books o'er which her dreamy blue eyes pondered!

I see ye, and forget,

Just for the moment, that the night and morning

Henceforth to me are one;

That with Love's brilliant gold and purple dawning

I in this life am done."

"Prophetic of the end! Did she dream how it would all terminate? Did she deliberately win my heart only to crush it when won?"

"Mr. Fielding?"

It came in a sweet, tender voice, and a woman's tread among the red maple-leaves broke the silence.

He looked up, and met the gaze of her of whom he had been dreaming. Maud stood before him, with tears in her brown eyes, and a subdued, womanly joy in her manner.

"Maud, have you come to mock a miserable man?"

"Mr. Fielding, I am a woman now. I govern my own actions, and do not allow others to rule my destiny as I did when a girl. Five years have taught me self-reliance."

"They should have taught me to conquer a hopeless love, but they have not. I was dreaming of you just now."

Then, in a changed voice, —

"Are your relatives with you?"

"If you mean Mrs. Landersdale and Fred, I have not seen them since that happy, miserable summer we spent together here so long ago. They are still in Europe, I believe; but Maud Pelham, spinster, has been alone all these five years."

She did not mean there should be, but there was a melancholy cadence in the tones of her voice.

John's face had grown radiant, and he began to comprehend slowly the blessed truth.

"But I have always pictured you as married and happy. You have been waiting for me all these years?"

"Yes."

"Maud! my dearest! my wife!"

He had her in his arms now; and those few happy moments more than repaid them for their weary years of waiting.

Verne Landersdale returned from Europe, and stood in one of our Boston halls with the supercilious, condescending air that is sometimes affected by young gentlemen lately arrived from abroad. He had cultivated a set of English side-whiskers, and stared about him through a pair of eyeglasses.

As two ladies, accompanied by a gentleman, walked up the aisle, and seated themselves directly in front of him, he started with a pleased surprise, bent forward, and touched the gentleman's arm. He still loved Maud Pelham, and hoped for her forgiveness now that he had returned from abroad.

"Mr. Van Ruyter, I believe?" he said eagerly. "Have you forgotten a wanderer?"

"Why, Landersdale, how are you? Welcome home. I suppose you still remember my sister, Mrs. Ford; and of course Maud and you have not forgotten old times."

He shook hands with Flo, then turned to Maud with a deprecating, an embarrassed greeting. She met his mute appeal for forgiveness with a frank, friendly smile.

"Truly happy to welcome you home, Verne. Have your wanderings been pleasant? and how is Aunt Landersdale? I should have been notified of your arrival, I think."

"We just arrived in New York yesterday, Maud," he hastened to explain; "and mother was speaking of you today. We haven't

heard a word of your whereabouts for six months past. We expected to receive your wedding-cards ere this."

He added this with a forced laugh; but he never dreamed that she could be married.

Her next words were a death-blow to all his hopes.

"My wedding was private, and there were no cards, Verne. I wrote your mother about it; but the foreign mails are not very reliable."

She noted his deathly pallor, and with womanly pity turned to greet a party of friends who had just entered, at the same time attracting Flo's attention away from Verne.

"Oh, by the way, Landersdale," Van Ruyter said, "my old friend lectures to-night. Colonel Fielding has won an enviable reputation as an orator, and Maud is of course exceedingly proud of her lord and master."

Verne made some rather wandering reply, and sat gazing absently before him. He had strolled into the hall to while away a leisure hour, and had not had the remotest idea of who the lecturer was, or what was the subject of his discourse.

The band struck up "*See! the Conquering Hero Comes*," and John Fielding, sterner and graver than of old, came upon the platform with a party of gentlemen. He was introduced to his audience, heartily cheered, and then stepped forward to the reading-desk.

His lecture was rather of a political nature; but he touched lightly upon matters of national discord.

Enough to say, that it was entertaining, witty, and eloquent, with here and there a touch of almost sublime power, and drew down enthusiastic applause from his critical Boston audience.

At last it was over; and, making his way through a crowd of admirers, John Fielding passed Verne rather roughly in endeavoring to reach Maud and her party. He turned to apologize, with a courtly bow; and Verne, seeing he was recognized, impulsively held out his hand.

"John, can the past ever be forgotten between us? I have just returned from abroad, and wish to see mother, and make up old scores."

He tried to laugh; but his voice choked. John Fielding's face grew stern and sorrow-

ful; but he did not reject the proffered hand.

"I forgive you, Verne," he said, "because you are my brother, and I must remember that the same mother bore us. But you can never make your peace with her on this earth. She died of those last cruel words you gave her, and went to her long home in Greenwood, more than four years ago."

John Fielding passed down the aisle, and Verne saw him leave the hall with a host of

friends and admirers following and congratulating him, and Maud, happy and smiling, leaning upon his arm.

Verne stood alone where his brother had left him. Rich in this world's goods, yet utterly forsaken and alone. The one bright hope of his life had that night been rudely destroyed. Mocking memories of a lost love haunted him; and a tardy remorse was gnawing at his heart-strings, nevermore to cease until he, too, should follow his heart-broken mother to her last rest.





## A SEARCH FOR A CHAMBERMAID.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

"I am really discouraged!" exclaimed pretty little Mrs. Ellis, as she laid down the morning paper in which she had been reading the advertisements for the past half-hour.

"Six different servants within as many months! I am ashamed to think of it. I always did believe that it was more than half the fault of the mistress when I heard of a lady who was continually changing her servants; and yet it does seem as if I could not help it. They were so slatternly, or so much above their station; and now I must go trotting about all this forenoon from pillar to post, — trudging up countless stairs, or through filthy alleys, in search of the seventh specimen. Let me see. I believe I counted six in this column." And she took up the paper again, just as the door opened, and a young man entered with a merry "Good-morning, auntie! Why, what's the matter now? I never saw you look so blue before."

"O Ed! is that you?" exclaimed Mrs. Ellis, brightening a little. "I am worried to death about these hateful servants. The last one I had — Maria, you know — walked off yesterday without a moment's warning, because I asked her to hold baby while I came down to receive Mrs. Gaston, who has just returned from Europe, and called rather late. It was Thursday, and Maria talked about her 'day out,' and 'not being imposed upon,' till I was in a perfect fever lest Mrs. Gaston should hear her.

"Your uncle says he is tired of the word 'servants,' and, if I can't get along with them, I had better break up housekeeping, and board; but how could I do that. Ed, — with two children? Poor little things! The idea of their being brought up in a boarding-house!" And Mrs. Ellis's tones grew almost ludicrously pathetic.

"And your uncle, too!" she continued, presently. "How would he like a boarding-house table, after the cozy little suppers that Chloe always gets up for him? Poor Chloe! she is the greatest help I have; and yet I know that living with a colored cook is one of the objections that girls have to coming here. I don't think it need trouble

them much. They have separate bedrooms; and then their work keeps them in different parts of the house most of the time."

"Perhaps you might get a colored chambermaid," suggested her nephew; "and then there would be no trouble on that point."

"No: your uncle does not wish me to do so. You know the second girl's work is to wait on the table, and help me with the children; and he says he prefers a white girl for that place. I am sure Chloe is worth a dozen of those horrid creatures we have had lately; and now she must take care of the children while I go to find another, who, I dare say, will be quite as bad as any of them. It is sweeping-day too, — and how my head aches!" sighed the poor little woman. "It is fortunate that Chloe is so kind."

"You just stay at home, auntie, and I'll go for you," said Ed Morton, rising as he spoke.

"You, Ed! Why, how would you know what I want?" exclaimed his aunt, in astonishment, for this great, handsome nephew — her eldest brother's son, and nearly her own age — seldom volunteered to do anything disagreeable.

"How should I know? Why, have n't you just told me? A girl to tend table, and do the chamber-work, I suppose, and help you with the children. Neat, and not above doing what she is told: in short, a being possessed of all the cardinal virtues, and some good looks into the bargain, I hope; for, of all disagreeable-looking objects, the last six or seven you have had here have been the worst I ever saw. Now let me see the advertisements that you intended answering." And he snatched up the paper, while his aunt, coming to his side, and pulling down his hand a little so that she could see, pointed out those that she had thought most likely to suit her.

"Let me see. 'A respectable girl, with excellent references.' O pshaw! Auntie, I don't believe in respectability that requires so much vouching for. 'Neat and capable.' That's as bad. 'No objection to assisting in the care of a child.' Much

obliged, but we won't trouble her. No wonder you have such a poor lot, if this is the style of advertising you patronize.

"Now here is one," he continued, looking down the column, "that I would trust sooner than the rest, for the very reason that the advertiser does not praise herself. See!" And he pointed to the place.

"'Wanted, a situation as chambermaid, or to take care of children. Apply at 19 Blank Street.' Short and sweet! I'll go there."

"But, Ed," expostulated his aunt, "they must say something. I make it a rule not to engage a girl without good references and a written certificate."

"Even if she writes it herself, I suppose," commented her nephew. "Never mind! I'll take the paper, and do as I choose, and we'll see if I'm not more successful than you have been." And, without another word, he left the apartment, and Mrs. Ellis heard the street door close after him before she had sufficiently recovered from her astonishment at his unwonted behaviour to give any further directions as to what kind of servant she preferred.

Meanwhile, Mr. Edward Morton had hailed a down-town car, and, having seated himself therein, began once more to read over the list of advertisements. Every one containing any especial vaunting of the advertiser he discarded; and this being the usual style, he found himself left with but five that he thought it worth while to notice. To the nearest of these he now straightway repaired, but found her quite as ready to laud herself with her tongue as the others could have been with pen and ink. Three of the five were alike in this respect; the fourth was already engaged.

"I would n't have engaged her, anyway," muttered Mr. Morton, as he turned away. "She is red-haired, and is cross-eyed." From which it may be inferred that the young gentleman persevered in his intention to find some one possessing good looks.

There now remained only the one to which he had called his aunt's attention. "This is the last," he soliloquized, as he examined it; "and, if 'brevity is the soul of wit,' this must be a very witty person; yet somehow I like it better than the others, though I have left it to the last, as it was the farthest out of my way. Well, I hope she may suit, for I am getting sick of the

business. It seemed too bad to let auntie go trotting about in such wretched places, or I would not have offered. 19 Blank Street. Rather more decent neighborhood than some of them," he thought, as he entered the narrow but tolerably clean street, and looked about for No. 19.

"Up three flights, sir," answered a civil Irish woman, on the first floor, to his inquiry of where he should find Norah Cregan; and up three flights he accordingly went.

It led him quite to the top of the house, but, while ascending the second flight, he heard a clear, sweet voice above him singing the last strain of "*Robert! Toi qui j'aime.*"

"A strange voice to hear in such a place," he murmured, pausing a moment in the hope of hearing it again. "Perhaps the singer may be the fair Norah. I wonder how auntie would like a musical chambermaid? With such a voice as that, she might find more profitable employment, I should fancy." And he walked slowly on.

But now the voice sounded from a room at the head of the third flight, the door of which stood open.

"Why do you look so grave this morning?"

"Ah, sure," answered another voice, with an unmistakable brogue, "my heart is broke when I think of the chamber-work and the"—

"But you don't remember," interrupted the first speaker, "how light such trials are in comparison with others. Besides

"'Who sweeps a room as to His laws  
Makes it and the action fine.'"

"Well," thought the unseen listener to this conversation, "I have certainly met with an adventure. Fancy coming to 19 Blank Street to hear some one with a voice like an angel or a Kellogg singing '*Robert,*' and quoting George Herbert. Doubtless the Irish companion is the Norah Cregan of my search; but who is the singer? However, I have played eavesdropper long enough." And, advancing, he tapped on the open door.

"Come in, if ye please," said an honest-looking Irish-woman, who was busily polishing an already shining stove. The room and its contents were poor enough, but every article was spotlessly neat and tidy, forming a strong contrast to other rooms

Mr. Morton had seen that morning. I fear, however, that he scarcely appreciated this fact, for by the open window sat what he mentally pronounced the loveliest girl he had ever seen; and, as he had travelled far and wide, and been smilingly welcomed by beauties in all lands, he was doubtless a competent judge.

"I beg pardon for intruding," he commenced, stammering like a school-boy; "but I called in consequence of an advertisement in this morning's paper. My aunt wished for a chambermaid, and thought you might perhaps suit her. I presume I am not mistaken," he continued, as Norah made no reply. "Are you not the Norah Cregan this advertisement refers to?"

"No: there's no mistake about that," answered the woman, sorrowfully. "I'm Norah Cregan fast enough, but" —

"But it was I who advertised," interposed the young lady at the window.

Mr. Morton grew more and more embarrassed. How could he talk to this fair creature about taking a place as his aunt's chambermaid and waiter-girl?

She, however, treated the whole affair in a strictly business manner, though she made no pretence of seeming other than what she really was, — a lady, and therefore on an equality with any gentleman, even though she *were* seeking a servant's situation.

"Will you not sit down," she asked, as calmly as though she were receiving him in a fashionable drawing-room, "and tell me what your aunt requires? I cannot boast of much experience," she added, with a slight smile, "but think I understand the duties of a waiter and chambermaid."

Mr. Morton mechanically repeated what his aunt had told him of the work and the care of the children. He felt as if in a dream, and half expected to wake presently and find himself talking to some Bridget or Hannah such as he had seen in his previous visits.

"And what wages does she give?" inquired his fair listener calmly, when he had finished. Again he replied mechanically.

"I will call in an hour and see your aunt, if you will please to give me her address," was all the comment.

Mr. Morton rose to depart. "I will tell my aunt to expect you then, Miss" —

"Leslie Davenant," was the brief reply, as with a bow she dismissed him.

As he descended the stairs, he heard a loud sob from Norah, and the exclamation, "Ah, Miss Leslie, my darlint! how can I let you go?"

"Hush, Norah!" said her companion, softly, and the door of the apartment was carefully closed.

Edward Morton felt too bewildered to plan what to say or do as he hurried toward his aunt's residence, but finally concluded merely to say that a girl would call in an hour, and leave matters to arrange themselves.

"I should only make a mess of it," he muttered. "But to think of that girl's having to live out and associate with Chloe!"

He accordingly made his announcement as briefly as possible, pleading an engagement as an excuse for his hurry; and in reply to his aunt's "Can't you tell me something about her?" only gave some confused answer of not being good at description, — "She will be here soon, and you can judge for yourself."

"Tell me her name at least," Mrs. Ellis called after him as he was making his escape.

"Davenant," came through the closing door, and he was gone.

"Davenant!" murmured the lady. "He could n't have said Davenant. That don't sound like a servant's name."

Nevertheless, half an hour later, old Chloe announced Leslie Davenant.

"What sort of a looking person is she, Chloe?" asked Mrs. Ellis of the old servant, who had lived with her mother when she was but a little child, and in her own family ever since her marriage.

"Well, honey, she's just the prettiest young lady you ever saw," responded Chloe, as she took the baby from her mistress.

"Young lady?" Mrs. Ellis echoed contemptuously. "Why, she is the new chambermaid; at least Ed said that was her name."

"Guess not, missus!" chuckled Chloe. "She said her name was Leslie Davenant sure enough, but she's a born lady if ever I saw one. Guess Massa Ed been foolin' you."

And Mrs. Ellis thought so too when she descended the stairs, and saw the graceful figure and lady-like air of the young girl who rose at her approach.

"I beg your pardon," she began, hesitatingly. "I think my servant did not understand your name."

"Leslie Davenant," was the quiet reply. "Your nephew answered my advertisement for a situation, and I promised to call and see if I could suit you."

Poor Mrs. Ellis! Her confusion was worse than her nephew's had been. How could she ask this young girl for references? She began half a dozen sentences, and left them all unfinished. Finally she chose what was perhaps the wisest course, and said, frankly, —

"I am afraid, Miss Davenant, that you will think me very rude, but you are so different — so unfitted for the situation you are seeking, that I scarcely know how to address you."

For a moment a haughty blush rose to her listener's brow, and she half rose, as if to take leave; but Mrs. Ellis's manner was so kind, and even deprecating, that an instant's reflection changed her feelings, and she sank back into her chair.

"Of course I am aware, Mrs. Ellis," she began, after a painful silence on both sides, "that I do not appear like an ordinary servant, nor can I expect any one to employ me without some explanation. My mother is dead, and I have no one to look to for support or guidance. The old servant of my mother, with whom I have been staying, would gladly keep me with her, but that is impossible. My education would enable me to teach, but for certain reasons I must have a place at once; and to wait for a teacher's situation, with no one to recommend me, might waste much time. I feel sure I could perform the duties you would require," she added, wistfully.

"I do not doubt that in the least," Mrs. Ellis replied warmly; "and I will gladly engage you until I can help you to a more suitable situation, if you will come on terms of equality. We will take care of the children together, and do the work together; but I cannot have you eat and sit with Chloe."

"I thank you, Mrs. Ellis," answered the girl, gratefully, "and, believe me, I appreciate your kindness, but I cannot accept your proposition. If I may come to occupy the same place as any servant, — eat with Chloe, and sit with her, unless I prefer my own room, — I will most thankfully do so."

"Be it so then," answered Mrs. Ellis

with a sigh; "though I shall feel as if I were grievously wronging you."

"Instead of which you will be helping me more truly than in any other way," replied Leslie, rising. "And now, if you would like me to come at once, I will go back to Norah's and get my clothes, and return in an hour or two."

"I cannot understand it," thought Mrs. Ellis as she retraced her steps to the nursery, "but I will just tell *Chloe* enough so that she will take care of her and pet her as she does me."

This was easily accomplished, the old servant's kindly heart being already won by the lovely face and gentle manners of the lonely girl, and she eagerly caught at her mistress's suggestion that they should prepare one of the smaller spare rooms for her reception, instead of the attic occupied by Maria and her predecessors.

"Dat's right, honey!" she cried. "Jess you leave old *Chloe* alone for making the poor child comfortable." And she bustled away, her heart overflowing with pity.

The changes that took place in Mr. Ellis's household within the next few weeks would have astonished any one who had been previously acquainted with their habits. The master of the house suddenly discovered that he preferred to have an old family servant like *Chloe* wait upon the table; while his wife, after repeated but ineffectual effort to make her new chambermaid join the family at table, with equal suddenness became convinced that it was far more proper for a child of Clara's age to eat in the nursery, and would Leslie be willing to take charge of her there? While old *Chloe* grinned approvingly, and prepared the nursery table with great satisfaction.

Mrs. Ellis furthermore developed an astonishing faculty for housework, and flew round in the liveliest possible manner every morning, sweeping and dusting, and chatting away with Leslie, till the rooms were in order; when the two would establish themselves in the nursery, where they were sure to be found by Mr. Morton on his daily visit to his aunt. He had always been in the habit of calling frequently, but now he was really the most devoted of nephews.

Mrs. Ellis was shrewd enough to see where the attraction lay, and inwardly congratulated herself upon it. No word had ever passed between Leslie and herself as to the cause of the girl's taking a position

which was evidently so different from what she had been accustomed to since their first meeting; yet Mrs. Ellis felt every confidence in her, and was quietly exerting herself to the utmost to obtain for her a suitable situation in some young ladies' seminary, where her unusual musical talent would be appreciated.

It had only been from hearing her sing to the children that Mrs. Ellis had become aware of this talent, for Leslie shrank from anything like display of her accomplishments; and it was with much difficulty that Mrs. Ellis prevailed upon her when they were quite alone to sit down at the piano; but, once there, she seemed to forget everything, and played and sang till her kind friend, herself no mean performer, was fairly enraptured. No persuasions, however, could induce Leslie to perform for Mr. Ellis or Mr. Morton.

"No, no, my dear madam," she said, blushing deeply: "your kindness makes me forget my proper place, but you must not tempt me to do so."

Thus the weeks glided quietly by, and Leslie had been two months with Mrs. Ellis, when the monotony of their daily life was broken in upon by Mr. Ellis's desire to give rather a large dinner-party. They had received many invitations, he said, and it was time they made some return. Beside, there was a gentleman, a business acquaintance, to whom he wished to show more attention.

Mrs. Ellis made one stipulation — that they should hire waiters for the occasion — before she announced the plan to Leslie.

"Now I do hope that for once, Leslie, you will yield to my request, and join us at dinner," she said. "There will be several people here with whom I know you would be pleased, and we shall have music in the evening."

But Leslie shrank with something like terror from the proposal.

"Not for the world!" she cried, excitedly. "Only think, if I should be seen by" — She stopped suddenly, in great confusion, and, picking up baby Robbie, began dancing him to hide her burning cheeks.

Mrs. Ellis would gladly have had that sentence completed, but she kindly took no notice, and said nothing more of Leslie's joining the guests.

The day arrived, and so did the company.

Leslie and her little charges were bountifully provided for in the nursery at an early hour by Chloe, who then departed to superintend matters in the kitchen.

Robbie had fallen asleep, and Clara seemed following his example, when she roused and asked for water. Leslie, finding there was none that was cool up-stairs, bade her lie still, and she would run down to the kitchen for some. She hesitated a moment at the stairs, and listened anxiously, but there was no sound save from the dining-room. Evidently all the guests were there, and, re-assured, Leslie hurried on to the kitchen, filled her pitcher, and was returning, when, as she was crossing the front hall, the bell rang violently, and one of the waiters standing near opened the door so promptly that Leslie had no time to escape, and admitted a man, apparently a stranger, for he said as he entered, —

"Mr. Ellis resides here, does he not?"

At the sound of the voice Leslie shrank back, as if to hide herself, but too late. The new-comer had caught a glimpse of her face, and, with an exclamation of surprise, seized her arm.

"So, Leslie Davenant, I have found you at last!" he cried. "You thought to escape me, did you?" he continued with a sneer, as he dragged her out into the light with a grasp that caused her to shriek with pain as well as fear.

The sound reached the dining-room, and the door was swung suddenly open by Mr. Ellis, who, followed by Mr. Morton, and other gentlemen, rushed to the rescue.

"Touch that lady again at your peril!" exclaimed Mr. Ellis indignantly, as he flung the intruder's hand from Leslie's arm. "Who are you that dares to thus insult any member of my family?" Then, as the light fell more fully on the stranger's face, he saw, to his unbounded astonishment, that he was the very guest in whose honor the dinner had been given, and at whose absence all had been wondering.

"Mr. Harndon!" he exclaimed in somewhat milder tones. "What possible claim can you have on this lady?"

"Merely that of a husband, sir," Mr. Harndon answered coolly. "Perhaps you will now acknowledge that my conduct was not so extraordinary as you at first thought it."

Mr. Ellis glanced from the speaker to Leslie, as if to discover whether this state-

ment was true; but she had sunk down insensible as soon as Mr. Harndon released his hold. Perceiving this, the stranger stooped to raise her, saying as she did so, "My carriage is still at the door: I will relieve you of any further care of my wife."

"Hands off, sir!" commanded Mr. Morton, who was tenderly supporting the insensible girl.

"Hush, Ed!" said his uncle. "If Mr. Harndon is really her husband, we have no right to detain her."

"He is not! I am convinced he is not, or he has ill-treated her. Otherwise would she have fainted at his approach?"

"That was from joy!" sneered Mr. Harndon, with such an evil look at the unconscious form that all shrank from him.

"There was no joy in that shriek of terror," answered Mr. Morton, sternly: "but she is reviving, and can soon tell us the truth."

As he spoke, Leslie opened her eyes. A shudder passed over her frame as her glance fell upon Mr. Harndon, but her voice was tolerably firm as she replied to Mr. Ellis's rather formal inquiry, —

"Miss Davenant, has this gentleman, as he asserts, any claim upon you?"

"Not the slightest," she answered. "I can explain everything, and bring convincing proofs of the truth of my story."

"Do you dare to say that we were not married in your mother's house last spring?" demanded Mr. Harndon.

"Surely there is no need of making all this so public," interposed Mr. Morton in a low tone, for the whole company, attracted by the confusion, had now come into the hall; and Mr. Ellis, perceiving the truth of his remark, opened the door of the library, and, with a courteous apology to his guests, invited Mr. Harndon and Leslie to enter.

Mr. Morton looked very much as if he would like to join them, but recollected himself, and turned to assist his aunt in recalling her guests to the dining-room.

The dinner was a failure, however, notwithstanding their combined efforts. Evidently all present, though too well-bred to make inquiries, were filled with curiosity as to the scene they had just witnessed.

Just as the ladies were rising from table, the hall door was shut with great violence, and immediately afterward Mr. Ellis entered the dining-room.

In a few well-chosen words he expressed

his regret at having annoyed them by inviting an impostor to meet them, and his hope that they would not allow the occurrences of the evening to interfere with their pleasure.

Of course all responded politely, but still the evening passed heavily. To Mrs. Ellis and her nephew it appeared interminable, so anxious were they to hear the particulars of the affair; yet it was really very early when the guests departed.

"At last!" ejaculated Mrs. Ellis, as the door closed on the last one. "I must run to poor Leslie." And she disappeared, while Mr. Morton turned to his uncle with an inquiring look, which Mr. Ellis answered by repeating the explanation which Leslie had given, and which she was now pouring forth to Mrs. Ellis.

Its substance was as follows: —

Leslie's mother had died years before, and her father had lately chosen for his second wife a showy woman, with little refinement of manner or feeling, who appeared to have gained such complete control over him that he had no power to oppose her in any way.

Leslie, who saw with much pain the subjugation of her father, sought to recall him to his old manly, independent state of mind, but only succeeded in bringing upon herself the ill-will of her stepmother, who, however, had tact enough to veil her feelings under what she called a desire for Leslie's happiness, and set herself to bring about a match between the girl and a nephew of her own, — the Mr. Harndon who had claimed her that evening.

As he was poor, and Leslie would inherit her mother's considerable fortune, Mrs. Davenant and her nephew concluded that this would be an excellent arrangement, and so skillfully did they manage Mr. Davenant that he was very soon quite as anxious for the marriage as either of them, and bitterly reproached poor Leslie for her unfilial behaviour in declining Mr. Harndon's offer.

Mrs. Davenant spent little time in reproaches. She had determined that the marriage should take place. She set the day, issued the invitations, ordered the trousseau, and superintended the toilet of the unhappy girl, who had never once consented to the marriage, or ceased to implore her father's aid, and who had now secretly resolved to wait until the clergyman and guests were assembled, and then claim their

protection, — a forlorn hope, but the only one she had.

But her strength had failed her at the last moment. She had been supported, almost dragged, into the drawing-room, but just as the clergyman rose to commence the ceremony, she had swooned.

Of course the whole affair had been interrupted. It was several hours before she had recovered consciousness, and then her stepmother had endeavored to make her believe that the ceremony had really been concluded. Leslie was convinced that she was deceiving her, but still her mind was so confused that she dared not trust her own memory. Her father, however, roused a little by the shock of seeing his daughter fall dead, as he believed, at his feet, solemnly assured her in answer to her eager questioning that the ceremony had not taken place; and although this was flatly contradicted by his wife, and he was at once taken prisoner, and not allowed to hold further communication with Leslie, yet his statement was confirmed by another and most unexpected witness.

This was no other than Norah Cregan, who had lived in the family since Leslie's childhood, and had been discharged by the second Mrs. Davenant, — being too devoted to Leslie and her future to be agreeable to that lady. On her dismissal, she had left the neighborhood, and taken the rooms in the city where Mr. Morton had found her; but, being informed by some of her former fellow-servants of the approaching marriage, she had hastened back, and, being secretly admitted, had mingled unseen with the numerous servants, and been a deeply interested spectator of the whole affair. When Leslie had swooned, she had lingered to hear further tidings of her dear young mistress; and after Mrs. Davenant had retired for the night, made her way to Leslie's room, hoping to be of some service.

She found Leslie alone, and in utter despair. Mrs. Davenant had persisted in affirming that she was really married; and her father, though acknowledging the falsity of that assertion, still refused to assent to her petition that Mr. Harndon might be dismissed, being afraid of thereby rousing his wife's temper, of which he had seen frequent and sufficient exhibitions.

Norah's entrance was therefore most welcome to the forsaken girl, who, finding in her a faithful though humble confidant,

poured forth all her griefs. Norah's assurance that no ceremony had taken place was a great relief from one dread; and her proposal to carry Leslie away with her there and then seemed the first ray of light that had beamed on her path for many days.

Norah was quite sure that Mrs. Davenant did not know where she lived, or even that she had removed to the city; and no one had seen her enter the house but the one old servant, who was as trustworthy as herself. The others had naturally supposed her to be one of the assistants hired for the occasion. Leslie should go with her, and stay till her health and strength, overtaken by all the excitement she had gone through, were restored, and then they would consider what was best to do next.

Leslie had consented, and in the dead of night they had silently left the house. They reached Norah's humble home in safety, and there Leslie had remained for several weeks. Then, being without money, and afraid of trying for any situation that would be likely for a young lady in her position to think of, she had decided to advertise for a chambermaid's place, which had resulted in her coming to Mrs. Ellis's.

"And what did Mr. Harndon say?" Mr. Morton demanded as his uncle paused.

"Asserted that the whole story was false; that they were really married; and left, vowing to bring proofs and legal authority to take away his wife."

"And Miss Davenant, — was she quite overcome? or how did she bear his statements?"

"She was perfectly quiet and calm, and I believe every word of her story. At the same time I wish she was well out of the matter. I shall see the clergyman who was to have performed the ceremony as early as possible in the morning, and if his statement agrees with hers, I think she had better be removed from the city for a few days. I understood Mr. Harndon to say that Mrs. Davenant was in the city; and doubtless they will come here to endeavor to complete their work."

"Why not see the clergyman tonight?" suggested Mr. Morton, eagerly, as he glanced at his watch. "It is still early. Then you will be quite prepared for Mr. Harndon's visit. Do you know the address?"

"No: but I can ask Miss Davenant. She said it was the Rev. Dr. Strong."

"Oh, then I know where he lives, and you need not disturb her. Suppose you let me go to him. It is not probable, but still it is possible, that Mr. Harndon may return here tonight; and, in that case, you should be here to receive him." And, as Mr. Ellis assented, Mr. Morton quickly departed on his errand.

An hour later he returned, accompanied by the reverend gentleman, who fully corroborated Leslie's story, and had begged to be allowed to see Miss Davenant, that he might assure her of his sympathy, and his regret that he had, even in ignorance, assisted in the plot against her peace and happiness.

"I will speak to my aunt," said Mr. Morton, with great alacrity, as his uncle began to say that he would inquire whether Miss Davenant felt able to come down-stairs again that evening; and in another moment he was tapping at the door of his aunt's boudoir.

"Is it you, Ed?" Mrs. Ellis said as she opened the door. "Come in."

"Are you quite alone, auntie?" he began, looking about him as he accepted the invitation.

"Yes: Leslie has just left me. What a wretched affair, Ed! and how shamefully that poor girl has been treated! I was just coming down to talk to you and your uncle, for I don't see how we shall keep her in safety for the next day or two, till we can get proper proofs of the truth of her story. Of course those horrid people will all be after her in the morning."

"I have thought of a way, auntie, and came up to ask your help in carrying out my plans," replied Mr. Morton, quite ignoring the fact that he had come to announce the Rev. Dr. Strong's desire to see Miss Davenant.

"Of course I'll help. I would do anything to help her," answered Mrs. Ellis, fervently.

"Well, sit down, auntie, and let's talk it over."

"But Leslie is coming back in five minutes, Ed."

"Never mind. I'll tell you in three, if you'll listen. In the first place, do you know whether Miss Davenant is of age?"

"Yes: twenty-one last month, she told me."

"Very good. That is why they are so desperate. They know well, unless they

can make her believe that she is already married, that they have no further claim. But they can still cause her much annoyance. Now my plan is to marry her myself tonight, and then let her precious step-mother and Mr. Harndon fuss as much as they please," said Mr. Morton, as quietly as though he had been remarking that it was a fine evening.

"You, Ed! You marry her!" gasped his aunt in astonishment.

"Yes: why not? Shall you forbid the banns?" inquired her nephew coolly.

"Not I! I have hoped all along that you would marry her some time; but this is so sudden; and, beside, you don't know—at least I suppose you don't—whether she will have you."

"No, I don't; but I mean to find out. If Miss Davenant is coming back here, you leave us alone for five minutes, and in the mean time go down and entertain the Rev. Dr. Strong, who wants to see her. I went to him. He confirms her statement; and now you keep him, for perhaps we may need his services."

"But really, Ed," began his aunt, "I am half afraid. Are you quite sure you love her?"

"Quite," returned the young man, confidently. "I have been sure of that for some time past. Oh, don't be afraid, auntie! I am not at all one of those self-sacrificing youths who would marry a girl they did not care a straw for to save her from a lover's persecutions. Now go and prepare uncle's mind if you can," he continued, as a light step was heard in the corridor; and as Leslie entered, Mrs. Ellis said kindly, "Dr. Strong is waiting to assure you of his sympathy. Ed will explain his plan for saving you from further trouble, and I hope most heartily that you will consent to it. Now I must go and entertain Dr. Strong." And, with an affectionate caress, the little woman left the room.

How Mr. Morton prospered in his hasty wooing may perhaps be gathered from the fact that a few minutes later he entered the parlor triumphantly, leading Leslie, who, in her newly found happiness, looked little like the pale, despairing girl of a few hours before.

A few impressive words from Dr. Strong, and heartfelt congratulations from Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, were hardly uttered when a furious ring at the door was followed by an



announcement of "Mrs. Davenant and Mr. Harndon;" and that worthy couple followed so closely upon the servant that there was little time to object to their entrance.

"I come to claim my wife," began Mr. Harndon, but he stopped suddenly on beholding the venerable clergyman.

"Leslie Davenant," commenced her step-mother, forgetting in her consternation her intention to say "Leslie Harndon;" but she was interrupted by Mr. Morton, who said, quietly, —

"There is no longer any Leslie Davenant, madam. This lady is my wife, — Mrs. Morton."

The rage of the baffled pair knew no bounds. Leslie learned from their conversation that her father had died suddenly, and, contrary to his wife's hope and belief, had left his vast property to his only daughter. Hence she and her dutiful nephew had redoubled their efforts to get possession of Leslie, having agreed to divide her property as soon as, by her marriage with Mr. Harndon, it should be in their hands.

But all their plots were now useless, and, after many idle threats, they retired, leaving Mr. Morton perfectly satisfied with the great success of his search for a chambermaid.

## A STORY OF THE WILDERNESS.

BY WILLIAM H. BUSHNELL.

"The man is madly in love with you, Louise."

"In love with me, Warde?" and Louise Carlton turned her soft blue eyes in the direction of the pointing finger. "In love with me? You must be mistaken."

"Actions often speak louder than words in such matters. All the camp are talking of it."

"Goodwin" (the name had been anglicized, to better fit the American tongue) "in love with me? The idea is preposterous!"

And the girl could not refrain from a peal of merry laughter at the thought.

"It is no jesting matter, Louise," cautioned Warde Allen (her *fiance*), speaking more lowly and earnestly. "Such natures as his are passionately strung, and thwarted love turns to the most bitter hatred."

"I am not jesting, Warde, and should be very sorry if what you think is true: yet I would not wound his feelings. He has been very kind to me all through the journey, as I to him; but I never fancied he thought more of me than any other."

"Both the elements of his nature are fiery ones,—the French and the Indian: his life has been passed amid the wildest scenes, and it is not probable he ever looked before upon so beautiful a girl."

Louise blushed rose-red. She was a timid girl, and such a compliment, even from a publicly acknowledged lover, caused the hot modest blood to mount to her cheeks. But recovering herself quickly she asked,—

"What shall I do? If, as you surmise, his temper might be dangerous if aroused, it will not answer to offend or make an enemy of him."

"Don't ask me for advice," he answered, with a trusting smile. "Your womanly sweetness and tact are worth volumes of anything I could tell."

"Then you have no fear of him as a rival?" she questioned archly. "Would n't it be romantic to marry a Bois-Brule, and live in a half-cabin, half-wigwam, on the frontier, and now and then take a trip in a little cart to the Red River?"

He looked grave for a moment, then answered, in the same bantering tone.—

"When we are alone, Miss Impudence, your lips shall pay the penalty of such treachery, even though it be in thought."

"Will they? I'll go and ask my new lover, Goodwin, to protect me."

And she walked to where the subject of discussion was leaning against the wheel of one of the heavy wagons.

Gedouin La Frauboise was a rare specimen of his mixed race. In stature and good looks he had inherited the best of both. He was tall, straight and sinewy, his hair black as that of any Indian, but of finer spinning, glossy, and wavy. And this, the effect of his French fatherhood, was revealed also in the softened lines of his features: the high cheek-bones were wanting, and his complexion deserved not the name of "burnt-wood," save as darkened by exposure to the weather. His carriage, too, told of the intermingled blood, and, though his movements were rapid when aroused, he was uncommonly graceful for a man. His mouth had very little of the characteristics of his red-skinned mother, save the regular and snowy teeth, and his eyes were an enlargement upon hers, and with the savage fire somewhat chastened.

A picturesque figure among the most picturesque surroundings was the Bois-Brule. He stood clearly outlined before the dark background of prairie, the little white tents, the groups sitting or lying at ease around the camp-fires, conspicuous for his bearing and dress, for his free, bold, careless, yet graceful poise, and almost nobility of stature. His attire was a commingled dream of savage lore, of display, and refined taste: his coat, of dark blue, glittered with shining brass buttons, and was girdled with a sash of the brightest crimson, the loose trousers met the fancifully quill-and-bead-worked moccasins of carefully tanned deer-skin, while a jaunty little cap was perched upon his head, its crimson tassel almost lost amid the long, floating *chevelure* that hung upon his shoulders.

When the step of the girl, light as it was,

caught his ears, he raised his head, and a soft smile, as the sunlight floating over the dark prairie, mantled his weather-bronzed features, and the hand that had been nervously playing with the gaudily colored fringe upon the seams of his trousers dropped, and remained at rest.

"What are you thinking of, Goodwin?" asked Louise pleasantly, as she gained his side.

The intensely black eyes of the Bois-Brûlé were fixed upon her, gleaming like coals, as he answered, in half broken English, half *patois* of the Canadian, —

"I tink of you, Mees Louise."

"Of me! I hope you were thinking well of me."

"Me always tink good of *Le Rose Blanche*."

"Ah, Goodwin, you flatter me with the name of the 'White Rose.' I do not deserve it. But," and she rattled on to cover her confusion, for her keen woman's penetration saw that the story she had heard of his love was true, "you are determined to spoil me, like all the rest."

"Me no spile, — me love you."

And his eyes flashed and cheeks flushed with the passion that was consuming his soul.

"Yes, I know," she answered, with a forced laugh, "so does everybody, — at least they say so; but if any danger should come they would all forget that I ever lived."

"Me fight for you! me die for you!" he replied impetuously. "Anybody speak cross to *Le Rose Blanche*, and me drive knife through his heart; and, any hurt come, me die for you."

The energy, the fiery accent with which the words were uttered, left no doubt of their sincerity. But Louise trembled as she thought that so intense a lover might not scruple to remove by force any who stood in his way, and his savage nature and training knew nothing of the laws by which civilized society regulated such matters. She felt she must give him to understand (if he did not already do so) that she was the betrothed of another, and that any feeling but friendship must be held in check with an iron hand. Tell him: but how? It was no easy task, and her heart beat fitfully as she continued. —

"I thank you very much for your good feelings toward me, my friend, and hope no danger will arise to put your courage to the

test. If it should, I have no doubt you would defend me nobly. But you must be very careful how you praise me, Goodwin, or somebody we know may be jealous."

"*Jaloux?*" he repeated, as if failing to comprehend the meaning.

"Yes; you know I am to be the wife of Mr. Allen when we get to the end of our journey; and he might not like you thinking too warmly of me."

The Bois-Brûlé started as suddenly and painfully as if the arrow of an enemy had been deeply driven into his flesh. His fingers clutched convulsively the handle of his long-bladed and keen-edged knife, his lips parted so as to show the line of white teeth within, and an oath fell from them as the muttering of distant thunder. But the sternly taught reticence of his mother's race instantly enabled him to command himself; and though baleful fires lingered in his eyes, there was little other show of excitement.

"You *marie* him?" he questioned, as if dazed by the intelligence he had heard.

"Why not, Goodwin? He is a good, kind fellow, loves me dearly, and I know likes you."

"Me no like him," was returned, with an ominous shaking of his head. "He steal away *Le Rose Blanche* from me."

"You forget that he knew me years before you ever saw me: in fact, we were engaged long prior to that time; and there must be some pretty, bright-eyed girl waiting for you to make her happy."

"Me nebber did — me nebber will love anybody but you, Mees Louise. Me nebber see anybody so *belle*! Me dream *toutes les nuit* you be one *ange*!"

Even though the homage came from so unrefined a source, there is no woman who would not have felt it deeply. — no true woman who would not have shrunk from giving such an honest heart pain. With tearful eyes she laid her hand gently upon the arm of her dusky adorer, and answered. —

"I am very far from being an angel, Goodwin, and you must think of me simply as a friend: that I will ever be to you. Yet we shall soon separate, and then you will forget me."

"Me nebber forgit," he said, drawing his breath between his tightly set teeth. "Me tink of you always, Mees Louise. — me *re-remember* you till me die!"

His voice was tuned to the very lowest

depths of sadness, and his eyes misty with tears, as he uttered the words. Then a fierce gleam—almost deadly hatred—shot from them, his face was crimson with passion, and his hands clenched until the nails were driven into the flesh. The girl saw the change, knew the meaning, and instantly took alarm.

"You say you love me," she commenced; but he interrupted her almost savagely with,—

"The earth of *bon Dieu* knows it."

"And yet you think harm of another who worships me as well."

"No! no! *C'est impossible!*"

"He does not think so," she replied, with a sad though warm smile, as she thought of her other lover, and how deep and fervent was his affection. "But you know, my good friend, that I am promised to him; and you would not have me break my word."

The Bois-Brule muttered something from between his clenched teeth; but the words were not audible, and she continued,—

"Tell me, Goodwin, what would you do if I had promised to become your wife, and another man should steal me away from you?"

"Me kill him! *Sacre la chien!*"

The dark face grew almost black,—looked as that of a demon,—and the eyes flashed the dangerous sparkles of a rattlesnake.

"And what if he should feel the same as you do? should try to kill you?"

The Bois-Brule staggered as from a heavy blow. Though entirely uneducated, he was not wanting in the ability to clearly see the justice of the argument. Yet his savage desires had never been trained out of the single groove that "might makes right;" and to give up the girl he had worshiped with more than human devotion was as tearing away a portion of his soul. It was indeed a terrible struggle, and for a time the balance wavered. The first mad impulse was to rush upon Warde Allen, and lay him dead with stroke of knife or hatchet; and nothing but the potent influence of the eyes that were so earnestly fixed upon him restrained the murderous arm. Had he been out of her sight and hearing,—had the two been alone in thick wood or wide prairie,—there would have been no second thought. It would have been a blow—a quivering corpse—a girl weeping in agony over a dead lover!

But it could not be so now. Louise pressed her fingers still more closely and firmly upon the hard, muscular arm, forced him against his will to look her in the face, and said, in the most persuasive tones,—

"Goodwin, you will not raise your hand against him? You love me,—he loves me; and if any harm should come to him it would kill me. Oh, think of that! Look at me, my good friend, and answer!"

The head was sullenly raised, the fiery, deadly light faded slowly from his eyes, his hand forsook the knife. There was a terrible effort, a deep-drawn breath, and then he said falteringly, and as if every accent was agony,—

"Me no touch. He love *Le Rose Blanche* too. Me fight for him. Me give life to make you vera happy, Mees Louise."

"Oh, thank you! May Heaven bless you, Goodwin!"

His head was bowed again, his lips touched the little hand that rested upon his arm, and then he dashed away into the timber, and was seen no more that night. He was fighting a wild battle with his passionate heart where no eye could see him but that of the great Manitou, who looked down through the rifts in the clouds, and whispered in the mournful tones of the wind.

The struggle with the Bois-Brule was over. The sweetness, firmness, beauty, and perhaps more than all the thought of the girl he so madly yet hopelessly loved bowed in bitter grief, or mourning unto death, had conquered. Any other cause would have produced the most terrible enmity and swift destruction. Both Louise and Warde Allen saw the effect that had been produced; saw that though his worship had increased (perchance for the very reason of its fruitlessness) they found in him a valuable friend in the dangerous and adventurous journey. Day and night he was all watchfulness for their welfare and comfort, followed the girl as a dog, and was the first to discover and ward away harm.

"Me love you! me die for you!" was his constant assertion.

"It will not come to that, I trust," Louise replied laughingly, as she heard the words for the hundredth time.

"Me don't know. Me tink so," was the response.

And the black eyes flashed vividly, as if there would be almost pleasure in the act, and he would be glad of such an alternative

to prove the love that was far more to him than any hope in this life or the hereafter.

"You must not think thus sadly, Goodwin. Both Warde and I are your true friends, and will do anything to make you happy."

The Bois-Brule raised his eyes to her face, and looked long and lovingly upon it, while his own was shrouded with a deeper sadness than she had ever noticed before. Then he answered, —

"Me nebber be happy more. *Le Rose Blanche* has stolen my heart. Me die for her."

"This is nonsense. A few more days, and you will never see me again. I shall be to you only as a dream; and you will go back to your home, and some fair girl will fill your heart, — a red rose take the place of the white one, — and you will laugh and sing as loudly, and dance as merrily, as before you saw me."

"No, *Dieu merci!* me nebber forget! Me nebber see home again, — me die."

It was in vain Louise and her lover endeavored to banish such sad and haunting thoughts from his mind. It could not be done. With his changed nature, he brooded ever upon them until they became a part of his very being; until he became a monomaniac, — believed it a not-to-be-averted fatality.

To have had the camp attacked by Indians, to have had some ravenous wild beast rush upon Louise, and the opportunity offered to throw himself between her and death, to have fallen wounded at her feet and felt his heart's blood slowly ebb away before her eyes, would have been to him the highest glory, — the very acme of human bliss.

But nothing of the kind seemed destined to occur. The red men were away hunting buffalo for winter supplies: the heat of summer had driven wolf, panther, and bear to the shady fastnesses of the mountains. There was no lurking danger that could be thought of; and the little band of travelers by day, and the little camp by night, was as tranquil as if the wild beasts were never hungry, and the nomad children of the plains had never been at war with the pale-faces, or the emerald sward been crimsoned with human blood.

"Our poor friend," said Warde Allen to Louise, as they sat side by side discussing their eventless progress, and the near com-

pletion of their journey, "will have no opportunity to make a martyr of himself, my darling."

"No, I pray Heaven not, Warde. It would be very sad indeed. I pity his infatuation from the bottom of my heart. It is so strange he should fall in love with me."

"Not in the least; for" —

"Hush! I know what you are going to say. Because you were foolish enough to do so is no good reason for another. But to think of one like Goodwin! He ought to have realized the gulf between us."

At the moment the not unmusical voice of the Bois-Brule was heard singing in the distance, as he came loaded with game, —

"*C'est l'amour, c'est l'amour,  
Qui fait le maide a la ronde.*"

In other days the song had been a merry one with him; but now nothing could be more sad, and they looked at each other, and then Warde said, —

"I doubt if at the outset he realized there could be any reason why you should not return his affection. He would have decked you with the most rare savage finery, and" —

"Deemed me contented and happy, no doubt. Poor Goodwin! I am sorry, very sorry, he ever entertained even a shadow of love for me; and would that something could be done to banish from his mind the strange belief — or perhaps desire — under which he labors."

"You mean that he will die for you?"

"Yes."

"Men of his class are always superstitious, — believe in the marvelous, and revel in the mysterious. It is a trait that has honestly descended to him from his Indian forefathers."

"Pity! pity! I have done the best in my power to disabuse him of the idea, but without effect."

"All you could say, all you could do, would be naught."

"And yet why, if there is any truth in Spiritualism, may he not have had some warning, the same as Napoleon and Byron, who were educated, and the world called great and wise? There may be premonitions, Warde, such as you and I do not dream of."

"Perhaps" (doubtfully); "but not of the kind he believes in. As he sang a little time since, it is 'all for love' with him, and

he has worked himself into the belief that it is necessary for him to die in order to sanctify that love."

"An unselfish view of the case, most certainly," she laughed. "Men generally, I believe, desire to live, not die, for love, and are not willing to become sacrifices upon the altar of the little rosy god."

And she glanced archly at him.

"If you mean me, Lou," he answered, "I must confess to a desire to remain with you, and enjoy love, rather than become merely a memory that would grow fainter and fainter as the days rolled on. But should it ever become necessary for me to give my life to save yours, not Goodwin, not all the Bois-Brules in the universe, would sooner throw themselves into the vortex, or go down with as many blessings for you upon their lips."

"I believe you, Warde,—I believe you from the very core of my heart. May a kind Heaven long preserve us both!"

And had they been beyond human ken, she would have impulsively thrown herself into his arms, and sealed her perfect faith upon his lips.

But it was neither the time nor place for such an exhibition of affection. Camp-life upon the plains is too much of Gypsyism for lovers to give full flow to the tide of the heart. It has to be restrained, or find the outlet only in whispered words and the burning flashes of eyes. Yet it needed nothing more of assurance for the one to give and the other to hear. The subtle telegraph of soul to soul was perfect, and no chord could be touched but the other understood, and instantly responded.

And even had it not been so they would have been obliged to master as best they might the burning impulses of their hearts, for their ears caught the sound of approaching footsteps, and the order to make all snug for the night was given.

Two days more of travel, and they would look upon the sunny valley of the Sacramento,—the river that rolls to the ocean through gates of gold, the Midas dream-land of the nineteenth century, and the graveyard of hope, ambition, love, and fancied wealth.

In high glee they camped when the announcement was made, brought forth choice stores, long treasured against a time of sickness, and a feast such as they had not known since they bade farewell to St. Paul and its

motley population was prepared. And with all but one mirth ruled as king; on every face but one were smiles; in every heart but one was gladness, knowing that the trials, the privations, and the dangers of the journey were virtually over, and their feet already standing upon the threshold of the "promised land,"—the one literally flowing with wine and olives, if not milk and honey.

This was particularly the case with Louise Carlton and her lover; for would not a brief forty-eight hours bring them to where their lives would be united and their love made holy by the words of minister and blessings of the church?

The one who joined not in the revels was Gedouin, the Bois-Brule. He sat a little apart from the others, with wildly beating heart, and lowering brow. Two days more, and the girl he loved to madness would vanish from his eyes, even as the mist of the morning from the mountain-side when kissed by the hot sun. Two days more, two brief spaces of light and darkness, and all would be for him gloom and despair. Two days more, and his services as guide and hunter would be finished. None but such fiery-strung natures as his could feel as he did; and his strong soul bowed as a reed before the breath of the tempest.

"Me no see her no more. Me no die for her," he muttered uneasily, as he looked from under his lowered brows upon the beautiful girl who sat revealed and glorified in the bright fire-light.

The thought to him was far worse than the most bitter pangs of death could possibly have been. All the tortures of the stake inflicted by his remorseless and blood-loving ancestors would have been as nothing. The merely physical is a bagatelle to the mental agony he then writhed under; and it would have required but little prompting from the Evil One to have made the pre-sentiment a reality,—to have let out his heart's blood with his own hand and knife.

And then again there surged madly up the thought that though the girl would be nothing to him, she would be the all-in-all to another; and the black demons of jealousy and revenge whispered fearful words that burned into his almost bewildered brain. Not so had the dark warriors of the forest given up the bride they had chosen to fill their wigwams. Not so had his ancestors who had bravely followed Monticame to

victory tamely submitted. Not so were those of his own *des races croisees* given to endure wrong; and why should he? It was a moment of such trial as but few hearts have been called upon to endure; and the end might have been written in blood of one or more had not his better angel come and poured oil upon the tempestuous waters of his soul.

"Goodwin," said the ever-sweet voice of Louise Carlton, as she stepped lightly to his side, "why do you not come and enjoy yourself with the rest? You know it will be our last feast."

"Yes, me know," he answered sullenly. "Two more suns, and me no see your face any more. Me no want to eat. Me heart vera sad."

"Come," Louise continued, wisely ignoring the tenor of his words, "come and sing for us."

"Me nebber sing any more only me death-song."

"That will be many years from now, my good friend. You have a long and merry life before you."

"No, no. Me die for you."

"How you will laugh at this folly a few months from now!—will forget such a being as the 'White Rose' ever crossed your path."

He shook his head, raised his eyes imploringly to her face, but did not answer. But she saw that which troubled her very deeply,—saw instinctively the dark purpose that was festering in his soul,—and with a rapid movement seized the chain he wore about his neck, drew forth the little ebony cross attached, and held it so he could not turn his gaze away, and said, in the most impressive manner,—

"Goodwin, swear by this, the most sacred emblem of your religion, that you will not do any act tending to shorten your life. Swear!"

She knew that could she obtain such an oath it would never be broken. But it required all her persuasive eloquence, all of her power over him, to gain her purpose. He shuddered, and was silent. Again and again she renewed her entreaties, but without effect until she at last added,—

"Then you do not love me, — never loved me."

"Me love you better than the *bon Dieu*!" he exclaimed passionately. "Me die for you!"

"Then take the oath that you will do nothing to hasten your own end."

The emblematic cross was raised, and pressed reverently to his lips, and in the lowest and most tremulous of whispers he swore by it; then bowed his head until his lips touched the hem of her garment, and dashed away into the darkness, not daring to longer trust himself in her presence.

But on the morrow the stoical blood of the red man had obtained complete mastery over the volatile French; and he gave no outward sign of the volcanic struggle going on within, and not even the sympathizing Louise knew how terrible it had been.

The last night of camping came. Before the going-down of another sun the party that had passed so many weary weeks of travel together would be broken up, separated, and each would go to seek for the wealth that had lured them through sterile desert and rocky canyon, where the wild Indian and monster grisly lay in ambush. To this effect orders had been given by the captain of the train, and the guides and hunters paid and discharged.

"I must bid you farewell tomorrow," said Louise to the Bois-Brule, "and, as I shall have no better opportunity to do so, I wish you to have this little gift to keep me in memory."

And she unstrung a little chain of gold from about her neck, to which hung a tiny miniature of herself, and placed it within his hand.

It was instantly and rapturously pressed to his lips; and, murmuring his thanks, he added, in a broken voice,—

"Me wear it above me heart till me die for you, *Le Rose Blanche*."

She would yet once more have attempted to counteract the effects of the dark shadow that was haunting him; but time was not permitted. At the instant she was called away by her other (but not more devoted) lover; and, as if controlled by some spell he could not master, by some power that held captive both soul and will, Goodwin followed, and took his place in the gay circle around the camp-fire.

That night the hitherto strict rule of the train was loosened. From the first, the most perfect temperance had been observed. Now the little store of ardent spirits that had been guarded against sickness was produced to emphasize the general jollity.

"One cup more, and the last," said the

captain. "A parting health to each and all, and good luck in their future undertakings. Stay: the water has given out."

"Let me go and bring some," said Louise, springing to her feet, "It is but a step to the spring."

Securing a pitcher, she started upon her errand. From a mossy rock on the bank of a thickly wooded stream near at hand trickled a thread of the purest and coolest water, distilled from the regions of eternal snow and ice far above. Thither the girl hastened, and kneeling by the little limpid pool dipped the pitcher into it. Then a scream of the most intense and terrible agony and alarm burst from her lips, and she fell fainting to the ground.

With almost lightning rapidity all rushed to where she was lying; but the Bois-Brule was the foremost. He lifted her in his strong arms, and horror chilled his very soul as he saw an immense mountain rattlesnake hanging to her arm: its venomous teeth had become entangled in her dress.

To tear the monstrosity of nature loose, to dash it to the ground, and trample out all of life beneath his heel, was but the work of an instant. The next, he had carried the insensible girl back to the fire, bared the snowy whiteness of her arm, and was calling, in a polyglot of Indian, French, and English, for whiskey, — the best-known of all antidotes for the virulent poison of serpents.

There was none to be found! In the confusion that followed the cry of agony and horror the little that remained had been overturned, and the poor girl lay doomed to the most hideously terrible of all deaths, without the possibility of anything being done to save. Every tongue was loud in sorrow and lamentation save that of Warde

Allen. He was speechless. The blow had entirely unmanned him.

"*Le Rose Blanche* no die," said the Bois-Brule, with a strange light burning in his eyes. "No die. *Me* sabe her! *Me* die for her!"

He knelt by the side of the girl, who lay with her head pillowed in the lap of her nearly distracted lover, and surrounded by mourning friends, tore still further away the sleeve from the lovely arm, and pressed his lips to the almost invisible yet deadly wound.

"My God!" exclaimed the captain of the train, who well knew the danger of such a course, "if he has the slightest breaking of the skin, or an unsound tooth, he will certainly die. All the doctors in the world could not save him."

"*Oui! Oui!*" was answered, as the head was raised, and a gleam of positive happiness shot from the black eyes. "*Oui, me* know. *Me* die for *Le Rose Blanche*."

Again and again he repeated the to Louise saving, to him, *deadly, process, while* all stood awed with horror. Then he arose, trembling in every limb, and already beginning to be spotted as the loathsome skin of the serpent, even as the girl opened her eyes, and gasped, —

"Where am I? What has happened?"

"*Me* die for you, *Mees Louise. Me vera* happy, for me" —

Before the sentence could be finished he fell backward, — never spoke more; but his glazing eyes were fixed upon the face of the one he had truly loved unto death, for whom he had accepted a terrible fate, had made his constant word true, and died for; and no more noble or unselfish lover ever trod prairie or greenwood than Gedouin, the Bois-Brule.



## A STRANGE OATH.

BY LYDIA MARIA WINDSOR.

### CHAPTER I.

Yes, I was wrong perhaps; but then I loved him so passionately, with a passion that cold-blooded Northerners can scarcely understand,—for my mother was Spanish, and I took my nature from her rather than from my English father.

I was only a poor dependent—a fact of which her ladyship never allowed me to remain long forgetful—a kind of third cousin, or some such relation,—while he was Sir Walter Ackley, her ladyship's only son, handsome, rich, and much courted by the neighboring families, with whom, however, he held but little intercourse,—for the pride of the Ackleys of Ackley Court was proverbial in the county, and they rarely considered their neighbors worthy of associating with a family who could easily trace their pedigree nearly as far back as to the Conquest. Doubtless it would have been more becoming to one in my position to feel some slight throb of satisfaction at belonging, no matter in how slight and remote a degree, to such an illustrious family. But I grieve to say such was not the case,—indeed I would have run away on any fine night and taken a situation as governess, companion, or housekeeper, or some other position equally derogatory to the proud stock from which I originally sprang, had it not been that by so doing I should have cut myself forever adrift from one for whom I would have shed my heart's best blood, if by so doing I could have saved him one hour of pain or sorrow.

Thus it was that I lived on, treated half as servant, half as equal, enduring as I best could my patroness's caprices and whims, and answering the bitter scoffs and taunts of Blanche Linley—Lady Ackley's orphan niece—with sneers and sarcasms as biting.

Blanche Linley was the only child of her ladyship's youngest sister; and since the death of her parents, which occurred when she was but five years old, Blanche had resided at Ackley Court, it being, as I knew, the cherished hope of her aunt's life that Sir Walter should marry the heiress to all

the great Linley estates,—a wish which now seemed near its fulfillment, for Blanche had at length consented to fix the wedding-day for the twenty-second of the following month.

Lookers-on see most of the game, it is said: and certainly it was very evident to me that, while he worshipped the very ground on which she trod, Blanche cared not one jot for her cousin, though why she, her own mistress—for she had just attained her twenty-first birthday—rich and beautiful, should marry a man to whom she was indifferent I could not understand, unless it was that she felt she had allowed the tacit half-engagement which had existed between them ever since they had been boy and girl together to go on too far to retract now,—for Sir Walter, though an earnest and patient wooer, had nevertheless a limit to his endurance; and that that limit had been reached I knew from a conversation I overheard between them just a month before the day on which the marriage was to take place.

I had gone into the conservatory one bright May morning to pick some fresh flowers for the drawing-room vases, when Blanche and her cousin entered from the garden. I was completely shielded from their view by an immense myrtle, and, thinking they were merely passing through to the room beyond, I went on with my work. Instead, however, of doing so, Sir Walter stopped to gather some flowers for his *fiancee*, and, while he was arranging them, Blanche—who had lately been more than usually tantalizing, raising his hopes one moment by a sunny smile or glance only to dash them to the ground the next with a cold word or haughty gesture—being in a very amiable mood, listened with drooping head and blushing, averted face to his tender, loving words,—words which made my heart turn faint and cold, while my fingers crushed convulsively the frail, fragrant blossoms they held, in the effort I made to keep quiet and still, for I would rather have died than that they should have known I was so close to them.

By the time the bouquet was finished and presented, her humor seemed to have changed; for with sudden passion she snatched the flowers from his hand, and, throwing them on the ground, with flashing eyes and paling cheeks trampled them beneath her feet.

For a minute Sir Walter stood contending with various emotions,—anger, pride, wounded love, hurt feelings, were all, I could tell from his face, struggling for the mastery. Then, with a swift movement, he caught her hands in a vice-like grasp—I could see how it hurt her by the quick rush of blood mounting to her temples and by the way in which she bit her lip to keep back the cry of pain—and in a voice of smothered passion said,—

“What do you mean, Blanche? What new whim have you taken into your head? Thank Heaven there will soon be an end to all these caprices!”

“How do you know that?” she replied tauntingly. “Perhaps at the last moment I may refuse to be your wife,—may decline, strange as it seems, the immense honor of becoming Lady Ackley.”

He looked at her for a moment, as though he scarcely took in the meaning of her words, and then, in tones firm and steady from intensity of purpose and feeling, he said;—

“I don’t think you understand what you are saying, Blanche,—indeed I think you hardly know what words you utter. But, be that as it may, I swear before Heaven that I will be married on the twenty-second of next month, whether you are the bride or not!”

She saw that she had gone a step too far, but determined to show no sign of yielding or fear; she rejoined only by a mocking laugh as he flung her hands from him and strode away into the garden.

For a few minutes she stood gazing after him; then, with a contemptuous smile on her lips, and gathering up the skirt of her dress lest it should suffer pollution by coming in contact with the poor unoffending flowers lying crushed and withered on the ground, she too left the conservatory, and I remained alone, giddy and bewildered, wondering what it all meant and how it would all end.

I did not meet either of them again till dinner, and then none but a very keen observer would have noticed that anything unusual had occurred between them.

So the hours and weeks dragged their weary length away, and at last the eventful day arrived. I woke that morning from a restless, disturbed sleep, and, opening my window, found the sun shining gloriously down from the depths of a cloudless blue sky, while the cool air, laden with the perfume of flowers, doubly sweet at that early hour, fanned pleasantly my hot feverish cheeks. It looked so invitingly outside that, hastily dressing myself, I slipped noiselessly down the stairs, softly unbarred the garden door, and stepped out into the bright warmth of the June sunshine. A distant clock struck five, and, knowing that, though the household would soon be astir, I should yet have a little time to myself, I wandered aimlessly on, heedless of all the beauties which nature had spread so lavishly around me, till by and by, feeling weary and tired, I sat down to rest a while, my mind filled with vague plans for the future, for I had determined, as soon as I possibly could, to leave Ackley Court and earn my living in some more congenial atmosphere. Gradually the singing of the birds, mingling with the gentle waving of the trees overhead, exercised a soothing influence over me, and by degrees my ideas became misty and confused, and I dropped off to sleep.

When I awoke with a start, and looked at my watch, I found that the hands pointed to half-past eight; so, knowing that by this time my absence must have been noticed, I jumped up and ran swiftly along the paths, devoutly hoping that I might manage to enter the house unperceived, when, on turning a sharp corner in the shrubbery, I came suddenly upon Sir Walter. So white and haggard was his face, so pinched and drawn were his features, that I involuntarily drew back.

“You need not be frightened, Maud,” he said, with a wan smile; “I was just looking for you, and, as I have something to say which will require your attention for a few moments, you had better take my arm while I talk to you.”

Silently I did so, and he went on, in the same measured tones,—

“Blanche has run away—has indeed eloped with some foreign scamp of a fellow”—the last few words he almost hissed out between his clenched teeth—“and, as I have sworn to be married today, I come to ask you to be my wife. Stay,” he continued, in a voice a little less excited, as,

withdrawing my hand, I attempted to speak, "I know what you would say; but do you think that I do not know you love me? Bah! I am not blind. I have spoken to my mother too, and she has given her consent to the—the arrangement; so will you marry me—"Yes' or 'No'?"

Thus the temptation came, and I yielded, for, when, after a minute's silence, he repeated his question, I held out my hand to him, and simply answered "Yes."

All the rest of that day seems to me like a dream,—nothing stands out prominently in the foreground, but everybody and everything appear sketched in misty outlines. I know that he led me in to his mother, who received me with a freezing kiss on the forehead; I can remember the side-glances of the servants, the buzz of surprise which greeted me when I entered the drawing-room, attired in my bridal robes, the whispered comments of the gentlemen, and the meaning shoulder-shrugging of the ladies. I recollect that I repeated the answers in the marriage service clearly and distinctly, and that each response of my husband's seemed to boom and thunder like a thousand cannon in my ears, and then that after the breakfast we—surely the most strangely wedded of all the proud Ackley race—started for our wedding-tour on the Continent.

## CHAPTER II.

Two years had passed away, and at the time of which I now write Walter and I were again in Paris, having visited that gay metropolis once before at the commencement of our travels. Those two years had been spent in roaming abroad.

We had climbed the Alps, wandered in Spain, paid a visit to the Holy City, explored the ruins in the Crimea, drunk coffee with the Turks, sleighed at St. Petersburg, and now were lingering in Paris, on account of some affairs of my husband's, which had delayed us longer than at first had been expected; but, the business having been concluded that morning, we were to start the next day for England, and now, on the eve of our return home, I was sitting at the window of the hotel, gazing abstractedly into the half-silent street below, while my thoughts reverted to the strange events of the last two years, and, with sad heart and tearful eyes, I was going over once more in imagination all that had occurred since I

last saw the receding shores of dear old England.

Sir Walter had been very good and kind to me—kinder than, from the circumstances connected with our marriage, I had any right to expect. No desire of mine had been left ungratified, no want I expressed remained unsatisfied, and both in private and public he was attentive to and observant of my slightest wish—indeed I had overheard more than one lady murmur with a sigh, "What a perfect husband! How I wish mine were as thoughtful!" Ah, they little knew the weary pain with which I turned away! He was proud of me, I knew; how could he help it? Indeed how, unless he had been a stoic, could he have been otherwise than pleased with the admiration which my beauty everywhere excited?

But that was all; he did not love me, I could see. When, a little more than a year after our marriage, my bonny boy was born, I fondly hoped that he would prove to be the irresistible attraction necessary to draw to me the affection which I had so unceasingly and unwearily tried to gain. But it was not so, and, instead, the love denied to me seemed to be lavished with twofold intensity on my babe.

So, as I sat there in the deepening twilight, I wondered whether the future would bring the happiness which the past had failed to supply. Of Blanche I had heard nothing,—indeed her name had never been mentioned between us since that memorable June morning.

I was roused from this sad train of thought by nurse, who brought my baby in for his good-night kiss, and, as his chubby hands closed round my neck, I vowed to myself that, if ever patience could gain a husband's love, the prize which I strove so hard to win should some day be mine.

The next day we started for England, and arrived late at night at Ackley Court, tired and weary from our long journey.

The next evening a grand ball was given in honor of our—or rather his—return, at which all the *élite* of the county were to be present. I could not repress a feeling of conscious pride and satisfaction as I surveyed myself in the glass, when my toilet was completed, for I knew that I was looking very handsome in my dress of amber satin and black lace, with pearl and diamond ornaments; but by a sudden remembrance that no loving look would smile ap-

proval, no fond kiss be pressed on my brow, made me turn from the contemplation with a heavy sigh, and it was with a sad heart that I sought my child's room. After gazing at him, however, for a few moments, as he lay, calm and healthy, in a deep sleep, I could descend to the ball-room with a more tranquil mind and brighter face.

A gay scene met my view when I entered, for the guests were already arriving; and I hastened forward to take my place by Lady Ackley, heedless of the half-audible remarks which greeted my approach. My card was soon filled with engagements, and I danced without ceasing for some time, till at length a sudden feeling of faintness made me gladly accept my partner's proposal to go into the conservatory for a few moments to rest and cool myself.

It was the first time that I had entered the place since our return, and, while my companion had gone to fetch an ice, I sat so lost in the recollection of a scene which I had once witnessed there that with a start and half-uttered scream I was recalled to the present by a rustling in the bushes on the outer side of the door, which I have previously spoken of as leading to the garden. The next instant a woman's face peered into the conservatory, and, dimly lighted though the place was by the colored lamps hung about, I recognized in the thin, pinched features and wild, frightened eyes those of my dreaded rival Blanche.

With a startled exclamation I moved away, but she sprang forward, and, seizing me by the wrist, lifted up a corner of her shawl and displayed to view the face of a sleeping infant a few weeks old.

"You are a mother, Maud!" she cried. "For the love of Heaven give me shelter tonight; it is more for my baby than myself that I ask it!"

"Stay in the summer-house at the end of the lime-walk, and I will come to you," I whispered, hearing a step in the adjoining room.

She tottered back into the shade, and I had just sufficient time to regain a seat when my cavalier entered with the desired refreshment. It was very difficult after that to retain my self-possession sufficiently to enable me to laugh and talk naturally, — for thoughts of Blanche and her helpless little baby would keep obtruding themselves.

At last, having with tolerable grace ex-

cused myself to the gentleman who came to claim me for the next waltz, I hurried from the room, and, seeking my boudoir, I hastily scribbled a few lines, and, throwing a thick wrapper over my ball-dress, I ran quickly down the private staircase which led to the garden, and with swift steps traversed the lawn and lime-walk beyond, and arrived panting at the little rustic summer-house which I had indicated. Having given the note to Blanche, and told her to take it to the lodge-keeper at the end of the principal avenue, who on reading it would, I knew, give her lodging and shelter for the present, I stood for a few moments and watched her walk feebly away; then, fearful lest my absence should be noticed, I sped back again to the house, and, after a few re-arranging touches to my hair and dress, I rejoined the dancers, fortunately without exciting any remark. How I bore myself afterward I cannot remember, but I think it was pretty creditably.

The next day, in the dusk of the evening, I managed to slip down to the lodge. The woman who lived there had been a servant of my mother's before her marriage, and had lived with me till I came to Ackley Court; so on her fidelity I knew I could rely. It had been one of my first petitions to my husband to find her a comfortable situation about the place, where she would not have much hard work to do; and she had therefore been installed in her present home a few months before our return.

I found Blanche very weak and ill, — indeed her appearance had so alarmed nurse Foster that she had only awaited my arrival to send for the nearest doctor, — a step which I at once sanctioned, for I saw that without great care and attention the poor girl would soon be beyond all need of earthly assistance. I told nurse, however, to fetch a practitioner who I had heard was newly settled in the place; and, should he appear at all curious in the matter, I told her to say that Blanche had come to lodge with her in order to see if the change of air would restore her to health. To nurse I confided the secret, thinking that, knowing the true state of affairs, she might be better able to ward off discovery, for I was quite certain that, should Lady Ackley find out that her runaway niece was hidden on the estate, she would at once, without the slightest pity or compunction, order her dismissal, only too glad of the opportunity of reveng-

ing herself upon one who had so outraged her idea of what was due to the dignity of the family. How my husband would act, should he become aware of what was going on, I did not dare trust myself to think.

A few words will suffice to tell the sad tale of poor Blanche's married life,—a story to which I fear there are too many companions to render this one in any way remarkable or noteworthy. Her husband—a needy adventurer who depended for living upon his wits—whom she had met casually, and with whom she had for some time previously to her elopement carried on a clandestine correspondence, had, while his fancy lasted, behaved pretty well to her; but, soon tiring of her charms, and having squandered all her large fortune, he treated her most shamefully, striking her on more than one occasion, till at last, fearing for her life, she fled from him with her baby, which was only six weeks old. Her small stock of money being soon exhausted, she had been obliged to walk the greater part of the way, begging now and then sufficient to procure food and shelter at night.

Thus it was that the once courted beautiful heiress returned to the home of her childhood. The story which she told me, interspersed with many tears and sobs, being ended, I was obliged to take my leave, promising that if possible I would return on the following day.

### CHAPTER III.

I was prevented from keeping my promise to Blanche. It was not till the second day after my visit that I managed to steal down to the lodge again, and then it was to find her delirious, brain-fever having set in, while the doctor entertained grave fears as to her recovery. For days and weeks she hovered on the narrow confines between life and death, and, when at length she began to show signs of amendment, Doctor Wilson said it would be months before she would be in a fit state to bear removal.

It was with a heavy heart that I heard this opinion, as I had now a double burden of anxiety to bear, for Lady Ackley had in some way become suspicious of me. She had several times met me leaving the lodge, and had on one occasion thought fit to make a very rude and uncalled-for remark; and I in hot uncontrollable anger had retorted that in future I should feel obliged

by her ladyship's refraining from interference in my affairs, as they concerned myself alone.

Bitterly did I repent this speech the moment I had uttered it, for I knew that now she would leave no means untried to ferret out my secret,—indeed I had more than once fancied that I was watched and followed when I went any distance from the house.

My head ached so terribly after hearing Doctor Wilson's verdict that I determined to excuse myself from the dinner-table, but a second thought made me alter this decision, and, the sharpness of the pain subsiding a little, I called my maid to finish dressing me. No company was at the Court, so we dined by ourselves, and a something indefinable in Lady Ackley's manner made my heart beat fast with fear and misgiving. All went well, however, till dessert was placed on the table and the servants had withdrawn, and then the storm burst.

"Walter," said Lady Ackley, studiously keeping her eyes from meeting mine, "may I inquire whether you are acquainted with the strange secret attraction which so often draws your wife to the neighborhood of Mrs. Foster's cottage?"

"Secret attraction! What do you mean, mother?" ejaculated her son, looking up with astonishment.

"Ah, it is as I thought!" continued her ladyship, in her most cutting tones. "I see you are not aware of the private reason which causes Maud to make such frequent visits to Mrs. Foster. I have several times met her leaving the cottage. On one occasion, happening to make a simple remark on the subject, I met with such a very strange and unladylike reply that I have not considered it consistent with my dignity to speak again to your wife about the matter; but I hear there are some very curious rumors floating about the place with regard to a mysterious stranger who is lodging at Mrs. Foster's, and so"—

I did not wait to hear more, for my blood was boiling,—and in truth it had been hard work to control my temper so far; so, with flashing eyes and burning cheeks, I interrupted her base insinuations by saying, as composedly as I could,—

"To my husband alone, madam, am I answerable for my actions, and to him alone will I give any explanation he may require; and allow me to remark, Lady Ackley," I

continued, fixing my eyes steadily on her face, "that it is scarcely becoming to one in your position to follow and dog my footsteps, as I am perfectly aware you have either done yourself or deputed others to do when I have been out walking alone."

Then, without giving her time to answer or waiting for anything my husband might have to say, I rose from the table and swept out of the room. With a bursting heart I rushed up-stairs, and was met by a servant with a dirty note on a silver salver.

A hasty glance sufficed to show me that the direction was in nurse's handwriting, and with trembling fingers I tore the note open, and read the following words:—

"MY DEAR MISTRESS, — The young lady is dying. Come at once.

"Your humble servant,

"MARTHA FOSTER."

There was no time for delay, no time to think how this act of kindness would be misconstrued and distorted. Offering up a silent prayer, I seized a thick plaid, and, wrapping myself closely in it, crept unobserved from the house, and ran, as I think I have never run before or since, down the avenue, scarcely pausing to take breath till I stood in the little porch outside the lodge.

Noiselessly I entered the outer room, where nurse met me, carrying the baby, and, in answer to my hasty inquiry, said in a shaking voice, —

"She is fast sinking, my lady. But go in at once; she keeps asking for you."

With a feeble exclamation of joy Blanche held out her wasted hand as I came up to the bedside.

"Oh, I am so glad you are come, dear Maud! How good and kind you are, — so much better than I deserve!"

"Hush, darling — hush!" I answered, bending over her. "Don't speak like that. Is there any one you wish to be sent for — your husband, or the clergyman?"

A slight shudder passed over her as I named her husband, and she said, in a faint voice, —

"No, Maud, don't let him come, — don't let him know that I have been here, or he will take away my little Louise and make her as bad as himself."

"The clergyman then — would you like to see him?"

"No, dear Maud, thank you; but will you read the service for the dying yourself?"

I knelt down, and read as she desired, till a sudden sound, between a cry and a moan, made me look up, and I saw Walter standing in the doorway. I sprang to my feet and bent over Blanche, for a few drops of blood were trickling from her mouth. When I had wiped them away, she motioned to him to approach, and he obeyed like one in a dream. Presently she held out her thin, almost transparent hand, and then a spasm of intense, terrible agony convulsed his features.

"O Walter," exclaimed the dying girl, with momentary strength, "thank Heaven you are come! I have been wanting you so through all these weary days, — I have so longed to ask your forgiveness, and yet have not dared to send to you!"

I stood to hear no more, but, slipping from the room, I took the baby on my lap and rocked and crooned it to sleep.

Half an hour passed, and then my husband opened the door of the sick-chamber, and said, in tones more tender than he had ever before addressed to me, —

"Come, Maud; she wants you."

I entered the room, but death I could see was waiting very near, and I was gently laying the child by its mother's side when, by a feeble gesture, I understood that she wished me to keep it in my arms, and, as I leant down, she murmured gaspingly in my ear, —

"I leave her to you; keep her from him, and bring her up to be a better woman than her mother has been, — so will Heaven reward you for it, and all your goodness to me. Kiss me now."

I pressed my lips to hers, and she lay quiet for a few moments; then, in a clear ringing voice, she cried out, as though speaking to some one quite close, "I'm coming, mother!" One gentle sigh was breathed from her lips, and then the angels bore heavenwards a freed and purified spirit to that land where there is no more pain or sorrow.

A simple marble tablet, in a retired corner of the churchyard, marks her last resting-place. Her husband never troubled us, for we read an account of his death in one of the newspapers three months after we had watched by the dying bed of his wife.

My tale is ended, my story told; and, with a half-sigh, I walk to the window, as the sound of children's voices comes up pleasantly to my ears. Yes, there they are on

the terrace, just returning from a walk in the park. First comes my bright, handsome Walter, carefully leading by the hand sweet, fragile little Louise; behind them follow Cecil and Madge, loudly romping over a ball, and in the background is nurse, with wee baby Georgie in her arms.

I return to the table, and take up my pen again; but a loving hand is laid on my shoulder, and, with a fond, tender kiss, my husband says, —

“Come, Maud, darling, put away your writing, — it is such a lovely day, and I want you to have a ride with me.”

## A WILLFUL HEIRESS.

BY CAPT. CHARLES STEADMAN.

She was nineteen years old, a slight, graceful girl, with laughing brown eyes and red lips that knew how to pout no less than how to smile. She was the one creature to whom my far from susceptible heart had ever bowed in true love-homage, and she was the richest heiress in Peatshire.

Alas, the knowledge of this latter fact blighted ruthlessly enough the first blossoms of hope with which her presence inspired me! I was only a lieutenant in a marching regiment, wholly dependent on my pay, compelled to deny myself many of the luxuries my more fortunate brother-officers regarded as the necessities of life; and I was far too proud to enroll myself amongst the suitors of the rich Miss Marjoribanks. My sole recommendations consisted of my connection with old and aristocratic English families — who were so greatly interested in my career that Lord Penhagard had actually procured my commission for me, and Vanguard, of Castle Vanguard, put a guinea into the christening-cup he sent me as an infant — and my own personal appearance.

Of course the various attractions of Miss Marjoribanks procured for her numerous devoted admirers. The maiden aunt who acted as *chaperon* to the orphan girl could scarcely have held an enviable position, for, on the one hand, it was easy to perceive her perpetual dread of ineligible and fortune-hunters, and, on the other hand, Miss Katherine herself was such a whimsical, self-willed little personage that it needed a considerable amount of tact and patience to act as her guide and guard.

At the time I first made her acquaintance her latest crotchet was the well-worn subject of "woman's rights," or rather their unmitigated wrongs. My opinion on the subject being then, as now, that woman's highest sphere is the domestic, and that only those few who cannot penetrate the circle do well to set their purpose beyond it, Miss Marjoribanks entered the lists against me at once, and, compelling me in honesty to utter certain truths concerning American society in those quarters where the movement has been most encouraged, flashed

upon me glances of the utmost indignation and contempt.

"And what do you mean by 'masculine' ladies, Mr. Richmond?" she queried sarcastically. "Is a lady masculine who assumes certain privileges your selfish sex has monopolized? One really meets with so few men nowadays that it is quite time the character was sustained creditably even by poor creatures like ourselves, who bear it as a term of reproach."

"My dear!" remonstrated gentle Miss Marjoribanks senior at this crisis.

I simply bowed in reply; for, though my opponent was generally rude when she tried to be ironical, I knew that she was a spoilt little creature; and, besides, I rather enjoyed those contests with brown-eyed Kate. The safest plan, when in her company, was always to quarrel desperately with her.

"My dearest friends are two American young ladies whom I met last summer at Heidelberg," said my fair foe, with strong dignity. "I learnt from them that a single lady makes long journeys unaccompanied in America, as if she were one of your privileged sex. In England one must be surrounded by friends if one would not trespass beyond the limits of propriety; there such delightful freedom is a matter of course. Aunt, why should you come to Ventnor with me this year? Can't I go and board in a family, and experience the charms of solitude and liberty for once in my life?"

"Go and board in a family! My love," replied the old lady, "our furnished house is already engaged, and it would be highly improper for a single young" —

"There, — I knew I should hear that word 'improper'! I am tired of the sound. All one cares to do or say is sure to be improper in the eyes of society. Well, no one can accuse me of being proper."

"True," was my murmured response.

"What do you mean, Mr. Richmond, by sitting there insulting me?" cried Kate, very angrily. "How dare you say I ever forget myself or my position? If you don't know how to behave, you had better remount that ill-tempered horse of yours. I



would n't be seen on such an obstinate creature, I know."

"'Nobody ax'd you, sir, she said,'" was my reply. "Sultan was a dead bargain, Miss Marjoribanks, and I have a propensity for bargains. Your aunt has invited me to five-o'clock tea, and, as that is an institution I admire, I shall not trouble my steed at present. You cannot blame me when I politely acquiesce in your own propositions."

"Oh, you can stay if you choose!" said Kate disdainfully. "The Misses Ducie are coming,—I believe you know them; some people think them the beauties of the county."

"They are more than beautiful," I exclaimed enthusiastically,—"there is something so eminently graceful in their quiet and lady-like demeanor."

"Yes," said restless Kate, getting up and crossing to the window, whence she turned round suddenly with the impatient exclamation, "Mr. Richmond, you took Sultan over the lawn for a short cut, for he has broken three geranium plants in one of the side beds. I do wish you would remember the flowers are my special treasures."

"I will make a note of it," returned I, taking out my tablets; whereat good old auntie looked up from her embroidery, and remarked,—

"Somehow you two are always quarrelling. Katie love, you should receive your friends more cordially."

"So I will, auntie," agreed Miss Kate, looking daggers at my tablets. "Miss Ducie and Major Saffron are just riding up the avenue, and Colonel Ducie follows with Augusta." And Kate waved her hand with frantic cordiality to the equestrians.

I could not wonder that the major, a perfect lady's knight, met with the favor denied to me, but somehow the appearance of his elegance in that pleasant room seemed to rob it of half its sunshine.

Many of Miss Katherine's suitors would have given much could they have enjoyed as I did free *entree* to Harts, Meadowlade. The fact of the matter was that in years gone by my own dear mother (who lived—bless her!—in a pill-box at Kensington called the Retreat) had been the favorite school-friend of the elder Miss Marjoribanks; and, when Colonel Ducie first introduced me at Harts, the latter lady had recognized my likeness to Millicent Vanguard, whom

she had lost sight of for years, and, finding me to be the son of her old friend, forthwith adopted me into her choicest favor. As a rule, the good aunt was chary of pen-niless officers, as those who had debts and necessities; but I think she trusted her friend's son not to abuse her confidence, though I must confess that she gave me freely many a *tete a tete* with her beautiful niece.

Between the latter and myself it was somehow or other war to the knife; we never could agree, and men took to condoling with me on Miss Katherine's openly manifested prejudice.

The military bets were heavy on the chances of Major Saffron; he had property of his own, and his father's lands, which he would inherit, ran into the Harts estate; so that, whilst I could not bear to hear the county ladies dragged into our slang regimental gossip so frequently, I inwardly agreed in the general opinion, and my heart ached the while, as many a fellow's has done before me, from the consciousness of poverty.

At last our mutual disputes came to a crisis; it was one July evening, when, in self-defence, I had chased Miss Marjoribanks—as represented by a striped blue ball—all over the croquet-lawn. My party won the victory, and I saw that Kate, who prided herself on her skill, was deeply offended with me.

For two or three hours we did not come in each other's way; but later on, when the dew was falling, I saw Kate resting alone on a garden-seat, and, as most of the guests had retired, I went up to her to say "good-by."

To my surprise, the face she turned to me was a very troubled one; the sweet lips were quivering, and tears glistened in the radiant eyes.

"O Mr. Richmond!" she exclaimed, rising and composing herself, "is it you? How late you are! They have all gone home."

"Major Saffron is in the drawing-room with your aunt," said I, hurt by her discourteous tone; "but then he is a privileged person."

Katherine made no reply: her face was suffused with blushes,—and how those blushes angered me!

"Well, good night," said I coldly; "if I walk quickly, perhaps I shall overtake the

Ducies. What a very charming family that is!"

"Why do you not give them more of your company then?" asked Kate scornfully. "Miss Ducie will have a considerable dowry."

"What do you mean, Miss Marjoribanks?" I exclaimed, seizing her by the wrist.

"Let me go, sir! How dare you? I mean that your visits here are a great deal too frequent, in my position" —

"As an heiress," said I, with a very pale face.

"It is most annoying to be questioned concerning your constant presence here. This very evening I was asked" —

"If there is anything between us? Should Major Saffron repeat the question, tell him I would sooner marry a decent maid-servant, who knows how to act as a self-controlled woman!" And I flung her hand away with almost cruel force.

"And I would sooner marry my footman, who is an honest man, and chooses to work for the bread he eats, than an idle and extravagant fortune-hunter!"

Katherine was at the height of her fury now. My own voice was husky with suppressed rage, as I said, —

"Somebody has slandered me to you through motives of self-interest; but, be that as it may, the friend who can give credence to such ideas is not one to be retained. I wish you good-evening, Miss Marjoribanks, trusting that in your calmer moments you will allow that I have hinted at naught beyond friendship during the period of our free intercourse."

"Who said you had?" she asked sharply. "I am sure nobody wished it."

"Of that I am particularly conscious; I promise you that my presence shall not inconvenience you in future. I wish I could as easily forget your observation as you will forget the temporary inconvenience it has caused you. Good-by."

But Kate turned her back resolutely upon me, and commenced pulling to pieces the flowers of the finest Gloire de Dijon rose-bush; I had nothing for it but to march off in the contrary direction, as miserable in spirit as my most bitter enemy could have desired.

So deeply had Miss Marjoribanks wounded my pride and sense of honor that her behaviour fought half the battle for me

against my hopeless love; I flattered myself I had learnt at last to despise the passionate beauty, and to dwell with equanimity on the idea of her approaching engagement to Major Saffron. But the latter regarded me somehow with very ill looks whenever we came into contact; and, as for my own feelings toward him, had duelling still been permitted in the British army, I would gladly have proved to him I did not value my honor so lightly as, I felt certain, he had represented to Katherine. The good old aunt sent me two or three invitations after my quarrel with her niece; but these I of course declined; and the old lady took offence by and by, for she ceased to ask me, and gave me a very dignified bow when I met her driving into Holmton, the town where our troops were quartered. I caught sight of Kate several times at church and in the country lanes; once indeed our horses met in the avenue leading to Ducie House, — I was riding up to see my colonel, and Kate, followed by her servant, was just leaving the grounds. It was a dead "cut" on her part; she looked straight before her, her head as high in the air as it was possible to lift it, whilst her man touched his hat, evidently much exercised in mind as to his young lady's blindness.

Miss Marjoribanks did not have the chance to favor me with another "cut," for, as good luck would have it, a few days after that incident I was drafted off with several others to Knightsbridge Barracks, there to remain for a short time till we took our turn at a foreign station. The last place I visited on the night before we marched out of Holmton was Harts; I was romantic enough to desire a parting view of the grand old casket which enshrined my no, not my treasure, but Major Saffron's. I wished them both good luck. But it was eleven o'clock P. M., and nobody was the wiser concerning my final folly.

My welcome home was delightful enough to soothe my ruffled feelings in some degree; better than any regimental banquet at which I had ever assisted seemed that quiet knife-and-fork tea in the pretty little breakfast-room at Kensington, the lace curtains waving in at the open window, which was filled with flowers, and the table groaning beneath the dainties which my womankind had prepared in my honor, not trusting our cook's skill on such an occasion. My sister Millicent, a lovely gray-eyed creature of twenty-

eight, soon to be married to the curate of the neighboring church, who had just obtained a living near Brighton, presided at the tea-tray, and the dear old mother herself, whom I had not seen for months, tried with trembling hands to help me to my favorite dishes, her kind eyes dim with tears of joy at my presence at home once more. With deep anxiety both mother and sister spoke of my pale looks, but I turned off the subject with a jest.

Christmas came and went, and I heard rumors that the gallant — Foot had not many more weeks to remain in the old country; Jamaica was said to be our destination. The Retreat was in despair at the prospect of my departure, and indeed, when I looked at my mother's white hair and wrinkled hands, I could have found it in my heart to wish that her only son might have done his duty nearer home. Nor can I deny that lingering regrets concerning Meadowlade enhanced my distaste for the West Indies; of course Miss Marjoribanks was by this time engaged to Saffron, whose regiment still remained at Holmton, but I did not find it easy to forget where for the first time I had learnt to love.

"Never shall I forget," as novelists say, a certain wet, cold, dreary January evening which brought about the crisis of my life; in this case the phrase is as true as trite. That evening with all its incidents can never be erased from my memory.

The clergyman's little sisters had been spending the day with Millicent at the Retreat. Being then at home on leave, I gallantly escorted them back in a hansom to Belgravia; and the three little girls keenly appreciated the rather ancient jokes I perpetrated for their benefit *en route* to the paternal dwelling at Pimlico. Having deposited my merry charges, I remembered that I had a commission to perform at a library in the neighborhood. I resolved to chance its being still open, and was just taking out my cigar-case, when, on turning down a side street, I ran abruptly against a girlish waterproofed figure that vainly endeavored to support against the wind a slight umbrella inclined to blow inside out. The girl drew back with a scarcely warrantable air of terror; but at my courteous "A thousand pardons" she evidently took courage, for she paused timidly, and asked in a trembling voice, —

"Oh, please, am I going the right way for Victoria Station?"

"Miss Marjoribanks!" I cried with a wildly beating heart; surely I knew that musical voice.

"Why, it is Mr. Richmond! What an extraordinary *rencontre*! I do not know if you consider it gentlemanly to stand staring like a goose in the middle of the pavement; but, if you do not mean to direct me, perhaps you will allow me to pass."

I had no doubt now of the speaker's identity; but what could it all mean? How did it come to pass that the carefully guarded heiress, who lived in Sussex, was all alone in the London streets at twenty minutes to nine P. M.?"

"Have you no attendant, Miss Marjoribanks? Surely you are not walking about here quite alone?"

"Your curiosity is impertinent, sir; my business is my own, and I have been attending to it. I am just about to return to Meadowlade, and, if you delay me longer, I shall miss the Victoria train."

I turned round and took her umbrella, giving her the shelter of my own, which was large enough to serve for both.

"Will you take my arm?" said I coldly. "For your aunt's peace of mind it is right you should accept my escort to the station; I cannot think how she could permit you to make such a journey unaccompanied."

"I don't want your arm," replied Kate abruptly; "but you can show me the way if you like, — still, don't let all the drippings of your umbrella fall on my shoulder. You always were so awkward. As for auntie, she has no idea I am not at present at Ducie House. There was a ball there last night, and I am staying there till their private theatricals next Thursday. I told the Ducies I would run over to Harts today, — and so I did for ten minutes, — and I said I would be back for the seven-o'clock dinner. I came up to London about one o'clock, but my business kept me later than I supposed, and I missed the four-o'clock down train. I shall get to Victoria in time for the 9.10 to Clapham. I must change there, of course."

"So the Ducies think you have stayed at Harts, your aunt supposes you are safe at Ducie House, and you are wandering about London?" I exclaimed in a voice of horror.

"Yes, it's almost as romantic as an elopement. But now I shall go back to Harts,

for I could never present myself so late at Ducie House. Auntie will have a fit of hysterics, but she 'll soon get over it."

"But what on earth has brought you into these little by-streets. Miss Marjoribanks?" I asked gravely. "Your conduct is most imprudent, to say the least of it."

"I won't be questioned or lectured by you!" cried Kate imperiously. "Mind your own affairs, if you please. I see the station now, and I decline your company farther. Give me my umbrella; you had no right to address me. I thought you were aware our acquaintance had ceased."

I thought this rather unfair of Miss Marjoribanks, seeing she herself had commenced the conversation, but I raised my hat in haughty silence, and Kate hurried on with as much dignity as the weather permitted, whilst I followed her at a safe distance, determined to go down myself by the Clapham train that I might be assured she made the right change for Holmton.

"Which is the way for the Clapham train?" asked Kate, directly she entered the station, of an inspector.

"9.10—barrier over there," pointed the inspector; "it will be late tonight though, miss."

It was five minutes past nine already, but the man at the barrier was not clipping the tickets as usual, and indeed the whole station seemed in an unusual commotion, and poor little Kate turned very pale, as one or two porters, hurrying toward a particular platform, jostled accidentally against her. At last she marched up to one of them, and asked when the Clapham train would start. The man was labelling bags in a great hurry, and paid no attention to the gentle voice. I was behind the book-stall, but I heard the query, and would have hastened to her assistance but that I felt rather revengeful just then, and meant to indulge rather longer Katie's oft-expressed desire to travel unprotected.

She waited a few minutes longer, beating her foot impatiently on the flooring, and then addressed herself to another official present.

"Can't say, miss; trains is all anyhow tonight, on account of H. R. H. Prince Waldemar of Prussia."

"On account of the Prince!" she exclaimed, much puzzled.

"Yes, miss; he's going down to Portsmouth with all his suite to embark before

morning, and they're rather late, so we are all upset."

"But, if the Clapham train is late, I shall never catch the last train to Holmton!" cried Kate, in despair. "It leaves a little before ten, I know."

"And we've orders to keep the line clear till ten, miss," said the man. "Clapham train can't run before that anyhow."

"Oh, what shall I do?" appealed the poor girl to the man. "I have only my return ticket with me. Where can I go to-night?"

"Can't say, miss," said the man respectfully, but evidently much pre-occupied with the luggage he was arranging on a truck. "Have n't you got no friends in this here neighborhood?"

Ere Kate could reply he was summoned to the other side of the station by an inspector, and she was left there by the huge pile of luggage, looking about as pitifully helpless and bewildered as the most weak-minded creature she had ever despised. I saw her shrink away as the bustle of the august arrival commenced, and address herself to the waiting-room woman who had hastened out to see the spectacle; but the latter did not hear or heed her. I saw her pushed against the wall by eager passengers desirous of obtaining a glance at certain members of our own Royal Family, who had come to take leave of their guest; but, when I saw a whiskered fellow stoop toward her and frighten her into a ghastly pallor by a kissing sound he meant for "chaff," I could bear it no longer, but walked up to her and put my arm within hers to draw her out of the noisy crowd.

Poor Miss Marjoribanks! She had not much dignity left by this time. She perceived me with a little cry of thankful delight, and clung to me in a manner that surely Major Saffron would not have approved.

"You will give me some money to go to sleep at an hotel?" said she. "You know aunt will repay you directly I get home."

"That will never do," returned I decidedly. "Your aunt would never forgive you or me did you take up your abode at a public hotel. It seems impossible, however, for you to return home tonight."

"Indeed it is," said she, turning her head away to hide her inclination to cry. "O Mr. Richmond, I am in such trouble! Whatever is to become of me?"

"Nothing very dreadful," replied I soothingly. "The only plan is for me to take you home, if you don't mind. My mother and sister live at Kensington, and will give you the kindest of welcomes."

"Oh, can I go there? How kind of you to let me! But I don't like to go," said she, blushing confusedly. "Does it—does it look well for me to go to a strange house so late? Your mother is sure to say it is improper for me to be out alone at this time;" and she laughed nervously.

"So it is," answered I,—"but you'll be good in future, I venture to say, and never do it any more. As for my mother, she's the dearest old lady in the world, and we will all try hard to make you comfortable."

By this time we were well out of the station, Kate still clinging to me by both hands. There was no occasion for this now, but she evidently felt safer so, and I did not forbid it.

"Mr. Richmond," said she presently, "where should I have gone had you not come up to me? How were you just then at the station?"

"I was minding my own business," replied I politely; and Kate took the hint, and inquired no further.

Just as we reached a cab-stand she paused and said,—

"I ought to tell you I came up to town to see a sick friend. Once she was my governess, but her husband deserted her, and he is in great trouble. I heard by chance only this week of it, and I knew aunt would not come to town for some time; and I wanted to see my old friend, for I was so fond of her. I have been with her all day, and I am sure my visit has done her good,—the doctor says so."

"I am sure of it," agreed I, knowing what an angel of charity my darling had proved to many a needy one ere that; "it was a good work, Miss Marjoribanks, but the means were bad. It is not the right thing for you to travel alone,—and, besides, you had to employ deception."

"I am very sorry," said the girl, in a broken voice,— "I see it was quite wrong. You are very good. Please pardon all my rudeness."

I almost crushed the tiny hand on my arm, but, remembering Kate's unprotected condition just then, I would not take a mean advantage of it; so I hastily called a cab from the stand, and, placing her within,

jumped with a glad heart upon the box beside the driver. I cared little enough for the sleet and wind on that night.

The Retreat must have seemed a veritable pigeon-hole to Katherine when the cab stopped before the door. Our hall was small enough in itself, and it looked still smaller, being the receptacle of so many rare skins which my father, an Indian officer, had procured abroad. Yet I doubt if the snug home look about the place did not possess a charm for her on that inhospitable evening. The gas burned brightly, and my mother was seated in her great arm-chair beside a cheerful fire in the dining-room.

"Mother, can you make room tonight for the niece of your old friend Miss Marjoribanks? She is in great distress for shelter, having paid a visit in town, and lost the last train home,—fortunately I came to her rescue at Victoria. Miss Marjoribanks is terrified at her audacity in intruding; but I have received such great kindness from her aunt in the country that I am sure you will be thankful to discharge some portion of my obligation."

"Lost the last train! Dear, dear! You must have had a fright, child!" said my mother, taking Kate by both hands, and kissing her kindly. My mother did not know of her little visitor's importance in the social scale; but, at any rate, the action brought a blush of pleasure to the girl's face, and rendered her much more at her ease.

"But were you all alone, my dear, at Victoria? Your friends should have sent some one with you to the station."

Poor Kate looked sadly confused; but I answered in her stead.

"A gentleman escorted her to the station, mother; but Miss Marjoribanks dismissed him rather too soon."

"Did you, my dear? He should have known it is very improper"—

At this word I burst out laughing, and Kate could not forbear joining me, but her agitation turned her laughter into hysterical sobs, and my mother forgot everything save her anxiety to re-assure her.

I hurried away in search of my sister Millie, and told her rather more than I had stated to my mother. Millie must have read in my excited face even more than my words expressed, for she passed her fingers smilingly through my damp hair, and told

me the incident was as good as a three-volume novel.

By and by, when we gathered round the supper-table, we constituted as comfortable a party as could have been wished. Kate looked to me more beautiful than ever in her plain serge dress and neat cuffs and collar, her only adornment being her gold watch and chain, and Millicent had amply fulfilled her promise to me of making her guest feel at home.

"We are so much obliged to you, my dear," said my mother gratefully, "for the kindness our Jack has experienced from your aunt and yourself."

"Our Jack" met the bright eyes for a moment, and "hemmed" dubiously.

"Do not mention it, Mrs. Richmond," was the young lady's grave reply.

"You seem to lead a gay life of it down in your neighborhood," said Millicent: "when Jack was at Holmton, he was constantly reporting some new form of dissipation."

"His company was so much in request everywhere," commenced Kate.

"And nobody ever grew tired of it," I added.

"Why, of course not, Jack!" said my mother, wonderingly.

"Do they miss me very much, Miss Marjoribanks?" I asked sentimentally. "You have n't heard of any romantic suicides down your way, have you? How many love-lorn damsels have followed the example of the 'bailiff's daughter,' and put on mean attire, and straight to London town have come, about me to inquire?"

Speaking at random, I had no idea of imputing anything personal by this last query; but Kate's cheeks were aflame while she answered lightly, —

"We have not noticed any especial emotion, Mr. Richmond; but of course the deepest grief makes the least display."

"Ah," said I, "it's evidently a case of 'she never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,' and so forth! Whoever she is, I am very sorry for her, for, be it known unto you all, I am already married."

"Jack!" exclaimed my mother and sister in consternation. Kate did not speak, but her great eyes opened wide, and her fork fell into her plate with a great clatter.

"Leave a little of the silver sound, if you please, Miss Marjoribanks," said I, looking

full at Kate, and noticing how suddenly her brown eyes fell. "I was about to observe, when my family interrupted me, that I have sworn to love, honor, and cherish that precious creature so often at my side. John Vanguard Richmond is wedded to his sword. Others take to themselves brides fair and fickle. My noble bride changes not, but will be true unto the end of the chapter."

"Ah, Jack, what a tongue yours is?" exclaimed Millicent. "We shall enjoy a little peace at home when you have taken your departure for the golden West."

"And, as for being a celibate," said my mother, "I quite expect to hear you are bringing me home some rich planter's daughter; confess you have made up your mind to it, Jack?"

"Anything over a million will do," replied I carelessly. "Thanks for the hint, mother."

"What is that about the golden West?" asked Kate, with sparkling vivacity. "Is Mr. Richmond intending to make an American tour? I know his admiration for the advanced institutions of Columbia."

"Ah, my dear," said my mother, her gentle face clouding sadly, "would it were only a tour! Jack is expecting orders to embark with his regiment for Jamaica, so that we shall lose him for six or seven years at least."

"Good riddance!" put in Millicent, but her voice shook even as she uttered the words.

"Oh! I did not know," remarked Kate; and after a moment she added gayly, "They say travel breeds conceit; I hope the seven years will not destroy your natural diffidence, Mr. Richmond."

"Your good opinion is too much for my feelings, Miss Marjoribanks," said I, drawing out my handkerchief. "Pardon my overwhelming emotion."

My mother and Millicent burst out laughing, which result had been my aim and end; but the former noticed soon after that Kate was looking sadly pale, and the latter, opining she was tired out, undertook to escort her to her repose.

When Millicent returned to the dining-room the supper things were removed, and my mother was dozing over her knitting, whilst I was extended on the sofa, my head resting on my arm. I was thinking of all it had been to me to see Kate amongst us that evening; I was thinking of the sweet, noble

qualities still springing up flower-like amid the weeds of self-will and pride; I was thinking how the hand of love could best direct that loving heart. I wondered if Major Saffron —

But, pshaw! why waste my time lounging, and musing on absurd "might-have-beens"?

"Jack, dear," said Millie, kneeling down beside me, "she is the prettiest girl I have ever seen."

"Don't, Milly!" I opposed somewhat irritably.

"And her heart is true and womanly, Jack. She has told me the particulars of her escapade; and she is grieving over her folly, — more so, I think, than she need. I assure you she has just sobbed herself to sleep in my arms: it is evident her indulgent training has kept her very childlike and clinging, though it has fostered many faults."

"Has she told you she is the great Peat-shire heiress?" I asked bitterly. "She has more suitors than she knows how to manage, and more money than she knows how to spend."

"Oh! is poor little Kate the rich heiress whose whims are the talk of the county? I remember you described her fully in your first letter from Holmton. No wonder then, poor child! she is so unhappy."

"What on earth has she to be so unhappy about? I don't see why a few extra thousands should depress her spirits. You women are such idiots!"

"And you men are so clever," said Millie. "You possess such a wonderfully clear insight into human nature."

"Jack, what is this noise about? Is it time to go to bed?" asked my mother, rousing herself, at that moment. "Is it time to go to bed?"

"Yes, for the ladies, Mrs. Richmond," I replied. "I will smoke my cigar of peace. Good-night, Millie. Jack's a bear, isn't he, old girl?"

The next morning, Miss Marjoribanks had thoroughly regained her usual "snubbing" deportment toward myself. She answered my few curt remarks — for I was all in the "blues" — in monosyllables, scarcely deigning a glance in my direction; and, when she saw me approaching her, after breakfast, she turned to caress Millicent's Skye terrier.

I was offended at her manner; for I read

in it that she feared I might presume on our friendly relations of the previous evening. My purpose was merely to show her the time-table, as she had requested; and this I did with as little familiarity as the most coy and reticent damsel could have desired.

"Your mother has lent me a sovereign," said she, "my ticket being no longer available. As I am near the — Road Station, I will go that way to Clapham, Victoria being so much farther."

"Yes," answered I: "most of the Victoria trains stop here between 8 A. M. and 8 P. M. Do you know how the Holmton trains run?"

"Could I not catch the 12.30 express? If aunt discovers my absence from Ducie House before she sees me safe and sound, I do believe she will have a fit. I had better put on my hat and jacket."

"Do not forget to give my letter to your dear aunt, child," said my mother, joining us at that moment.

"Oh, no, Mrs. Richmond! It will be the peacemaker; and I am only too grateful to you for writing, and for all your kindness to a stranger."

"Indeed, my dear, I have quite enjoyed your visit; and next time you are in town I hope you will come and cheer my loneliness. Millie is going to run away from me by and by, and it will need somebody of your lively disposition to make up to the Retreat for Jack's loss."

Kate put her arms rather suddenly round the old lady's neck, and gave her a genuine hug.

"Aunt will make you come and stay with us, Mrs. Richmond," said she. "Millie is going to spend the month before her marriage at Harts, and we shall want you too."

I felt excessively annoyed that my quiet sister's head should be turned by the luxurious life in Kate's dwelling.

"I scarcely think," said I, "that my mother and sister will be able to leave home before the wedding. They make a great commotion over traveling, being regular home-birds."

"You speak when you are spoken to!" spoke Miss Marjoribanks snappishly.

And then she departed up-stairs to don her walking-attire.

The morning had dawned so fine, that Kate needed no longer to wear her water-

proof cloak over her velvet jacket and furs. She looked the heiress when she came down again in a plenitude of ermine, a rare golden bird in her little seal hat.

"Let me carry your cloak," said I, buttoning up my overcoat.

Kate began resolutely to decline my proffered attendance; but my mother interposed.

"I have told your aunt, dear," she said, "that Jack will put you into the Holmton train at Clapham. I do not like the idea of your traveling alone; however, he has turned sulky this morning, and is too lazy to go beyond the neighboring station."

"I think my further escort will be unnecessary," said I stiffly.

If I forced my company on Kate, would she not believe the "fortune-hunter" was shrewdly taking advantage of his opportunity?

"Quite so," said Miss Marjoribanks carelessly.

Then the embraces of the three ladies commenced, and I thought Millie would never let Kate leave the house. Earnest looks passed between them which I wholly failed to comprehend; and Kate clung to my sister, and whispered something in her ear which must have had reference to Millie's marriage. The latter laughed outright, and told her that girls of nineteen were geese, and she was the silliest of little gossings.

We marched down the road to the station in dignified silence. For the life of me, I could not frame a sentence fit to utter. I felt that these were the moments of a life-parting; and I dreaded what might pass my lips in conversation, it might be, with the fiancée of Major Saffron. And, for once in her life, at least, my little companion was silent.

"Is the 11.05 to Clapham in?" I inquired of the porter after we had arrived at the station.

"No, sir. You will find it is marked with a star in the time-table, — Saturdays only. You've just missed one, sir. Twenty minutes to wait."

"Shall we go home, Miss Marjoribanks, or wait at the station?"

"Nice fire in the waiting-room," said the porter.

The spacious apartment was entirely unoccupied, and Kate sat down on a comfortable couch near the fireplace. I ransacked

my brain for something safe and reasonable to say.

"Major Saffron all right, eh?" I at last asked.

I had not the slightest intention of broaching this dangerous subject; yet somehow the words slipped from me involuntarily.

"Yes," said Kate.

And she bent to fasten her double-buttoned glove.

"Allow me," requested I, leaning toward her.

But she drew back as though I had proposed to shoot her.

"You need not be so frightened of my machinations," I exclaimed bitterly. "Saffron need not lie concerning every fellow he sees at Harts. All of us are ready to congratulate him; and, as for me, I am saying good-by to England for years, and perhaps forever."

"Button it," said Kate hastily.

And I did try to do so. But my hand was shaking; and finally I just held the little palm in my own as I sat beside her, wondering all the time why she allowed it, and when her indignation would finally have vent.

"Kate," began I suddenly, "what is the matter with you? You are trembling all over. Have I offended you?"

She shook her head, and looked up at me. For a long moment I read her face, and I had to bite my lips to repress the passionate declaration of love that rose to them. Was it pleading, was it trouble, that I saw in those hazel depths? Was there not something all womanly, earnest, unfathomable? At any rate, I read therein that Kate was not engaged to Major Saffron.

"Hem!" I coughed nervously, for I would shake off the temptation. "Is n't your train beyond its time, Miss Marjoribanks?"

"No," said Kate.

And with her disengaged hand she began twisting one of the buttons of my rough overcoat, her eyes cast down modestly all the while.

"Kate," began I hotly, in a husky voice, "if you were as poor this moment as Milliecent's clergyman, do you know what I should do, and value the privilege much more than all the miserable bank-notes in the world?"

"Clapham train!" shouted the stentorian



voice of the porter as he stuck his head into the waiting-room.

"Good-by! Heaven ever bless you!" cried I, starting up. "Make haste: here comes your train."

"I can't go alone," said she; and, indeed, she was shaking from head to foot. "I don't feel safe alone."

"Don't ask me to come, Kate," returned I passionately: "I dare not."

"Don't leave me alone, Jack," said little Kate.

I rushed to procure a ticket, and the guard thrust us into an empty *coupe* just as the train was starting.

"Mr. Richmond, I want to speak to you."

I sat moodily gazing out of the window, my arms folded, my thoughts obstinately repeating, "What will the world say if you court such a fortune as this?"

"And I want you to promise you won't look at me while I speak. It's only a fable I want to tell you, but—perhaps a woman should not"—

Here Kate began to stammer, and look like a rose.

"Don't say or do anything a woman should not," said I, in as grumpy a tone as possible.

"Oh, you are cross," rejoined little Kate, fingering the buttons again.

Of course I repossessed myself of the hands. I could not help it.

"Fire away at your fable," said I. "I won't look at you. Something better to do. I'll fasten your glove."

"Once upon a time," she began, "there was a spirit used to live on the top of a mountain. Such a noble, handsome spirit! such a glorious spirit!"

"Anything like you, Miss Marjoribanks?"

"No. More like you."

"Oh!" said I. "Proceed."

"And there was another spirit the noble spirit saw hovering above him, all in the dark, gloomy clouds, only the noble spirit did not know that. He thought she was an angel, and lived in the blue, beautiful sky."

"Ah! the other spirit was a she?"

"No: they were both its. They were spirits. The mountain-spirit sometimes wanted to talk to the other one, because it fancied it was a nice spirit,—only it was not nice at all,—and the spirit higher up was very, very lonely, and did so want to

make friends with the mountain-spirit, but they never spoke a word, because one was too proud, and the other was shy. But by and by the mountain-spirit was going to fly right away, and — and —"

"Why, Kate!"

But Kate's head had gone right down on to my shoulder, and her face was hidden there.

"And the cloud-spirit said to itself, 'I cannot—I cannot bear it: the mountain-spirit sha' n't fly away before it knows the truth. It won't try to fly up: I will—fly down—to the mountain.'"

"So that's your fable, my own sweet love? Nay, Kate: let me raise you, pet. I cannot bear the taunts of the world: I cannot forget your wealth."

"Jack!"

"Don't look like that, Kate! Are you going to faint? There: don't give way. O my little love! if this might only last forever!"

I had her in my arms; and, as I heard her suppressed sob, my lips met hers in yearning tenderness. That kiss did all the rest. I forgot my pride: I only knew that in the first love of our youth our hearts were beating side by side.

"Are you sure you care for me, darling Kate?"

"I thought you guessed it always."

"No, indeed, you fiery little volcano! What work I should have to tame you if—You know, sweetest, if I take you in hand, I must be the master thoroughly, and drive you in abject obedience. You're getting frightened,—eh, Kate?"

"Am I?"

She looked up so brightly, and her eyes were so radiant, that the interesting ceremony above mentioned was repeated immediately.

"Jack," said Kate in a hurried whisper, for we were nearing Clapham, "you need not mind about the money. I shall have no money really till I am twenty-one, and perhaps I shall never have any. If—if you have it then, you'll give me my dresses and some pocket-money, won't you?"

Long ere we reached Holmton we had mutually decided that we could not possibly live without one another. By this time my real feelings had completely overmastered me; and, whilst I could scarcely comprehend my happiness, I no longer endeavored to thrust it beyond me. I drew from the

sweet, shy lips, how, on the evening of our quarrel, Major Saffron had just made his proposal, and met with a refusal, whereupon the gallant gentleman taxed Kate with a sweet *penchant* for myself, and assured her all the world could see how I meant to improve my fortunes. I fancy that Kate never wholly believed aught ungenerous of me; but she feared to betray her weakness in my presence, and assumed a harshness and coldness that she was very far from feeling.

That journey down to Holmton was an Eden dream to both of us; yet I doubt if its joy proved as evanescent as a dream.

When I took Kate back to Harts, and she escaped to her own room, leaving me to explain everything to the dismayed spinster aunt, I confess I was nervous enough over the task.

"I have only my pay and a hundred a year, Miss Marjoribanks," said I candidly. "My uncle Ralph Vanguard has me down for a legacy in his will, I hear; but there's no denying that I am far from the husband Kate's guardian would choose. I can only say I love her with all my heart, I have never loved another woman, and I can even wish she were penniless so that I could prove to her my truth."

Miss Marjoribanks wiped her spectacles, put them on, scanned me for some moments, and then shook her head gravely.

"It is a good thing that matters are no worse," she said sententiously, after a brief pause.

I overlooked the flattery, and caught at the implied approval.

"You think then, my dear Miss Marjoribanks, that there may be hope for me, after all?"

"Kate has settled it, has n't she, Mr. Richmond? When you know her as well as I do, you will understand that Kate's will is law at Harts. If we refused to give her to you, now she has made her choice, she would leave her property behind, and

run after you to Jamaica. No, indeed: it will be a relief to us all to see the child steadily settled. After her trip to London, I shall be terrified to see her out of my sight till she is married. And I have always liked you, Jack Richmond: Millicent's son has a claim on my regard. If you have lived within the bounds of your small income, you will know how to take care of Kate's."

Just then, my darling herself came in, all smiles and blushes; disarming, by clinging embraces, the first words of scolding that rose to her aunt's lips.

Old Lord Newstead, Kate's chief trustee, strongly opposed the match: but a long private interview with herself must have convinced him it was for her happiness; for, when I sold my commission, he it was who nominated me for one of his "pocket boroughs," so that Kate might wed an M. P. at least.

I have never distinguished myself much at St. Stephen's, though my constituents seem to have taken a fancy to me; for now that times have changed, and they are "free and independent voters," I still retain the magic letters after my name.

I have done my part, however, creditably enough in the improvement of our county sporting; and when I join the "meet" with my little Richmond on a knowing pony at my side, and we ride together over miles of wood and meadow land that one day will be his, I feel myself quite the substantial country squire. When we get back to Harts, we find two aged ladies, very feeble, but quite contented, nodding and chattering over the gossip of bygone years, and a mother—to my eyes more beautiful than ever—caressing her four-year-old daughter, and waiting to welcome me with eyes whose vivacious sparkle tells me that she has never for one hour regretted that fair morning when she ceased to be Miss Marjoribanks, and the willful heiress became the faithful wife.

## A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT'S DREAM.

BY MISS JULIA A. KNIGHT.

### CHAPTER I.

Midsummer at Fair Lea; and surely midsummer was never before more prodigal of silver mornings, azure noons, and purple evenings,—never more lavish of flowers and sunshine and jubilant songs of birds.

Surely was maiden never more happy than Evelyn Yorke, wandering along the banks of the laughing Lea, beneath its over-arching elms and beeches, singing some gay love-lay as she goes, with an accompaniment of murmuring water and a whole chorus of larks. Well may she be happy, for he she loves with all the strength of her fresh, innocent heart is coming to Fair Lea today. True, he will not stay very long, but it is enough that he is coming: once more she will see him, hear his voice, touch his hand. The very thought brings the quick blood to her cheek, for two long summer days they will be together. He will certainly ask her to walk with him by the river, and row her down to gather water-lilies as they did so often last summer. Oh, how it seemed then as though the slow months would never pass before their next meeting! And now she says, "Today he will be here," in an hour perhaps,—fair-haired, blue-eyed Archie, with the glance of a Norse king, brave as a lion, tender as a woman! Although he has never, in so many words, told her he loves her, she has long been aware of it by the subtle, unerring instinct of a woman's heart; and her own was given him from her very childhood, when she used to sit upon his knee listening to his boyish fairy-tales, her eyes aglow with absorbed interest, and he his chosen companion on many a fishing or shooting expedition. When she left school this sweet intercourse was resumed, but sweeter, closer, more dangerous; and it is an understood thing at Fair Lea that sooner or later the cousins will be husband and wife.

There is no shadow of a cloud on Evelyn's sky, no thorn among her Eden-roses: the course of true love must needs run smooth for once. So what wonder is it that she sings as she saunters down the mossy path, thickly spangled with anemones and hare-

bells, on whose fair blooms butterflies hang like jewels,—

Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love,  
Which makes the world go round!

Suddenly smiting the soft air, a gong sounds. Starting at its summons, Evelyn turns, and runs quickly up the path, until, flushed and panting, she reaches the long, low white house, seated like a queen on the top of the hill, amongst its brilliant gardens. The Hall stands cool and dim behind its pillared portico, a vivid scarlet geranium or pearl-white lily catching here and there the slant sunbeams.

"Time you were dressed, Evelyn!" says a languid lady, wrinkled in a manner calculated to inspire wonder in the breast of the observer, sweeping her long velvet robes across the marble floor. "And how hot you look! Be quick: your cousins have arrived, and you must not keep them waiting for dinner."

"All right, mother dear. I shall not change my dress,—this is clean," she answers, running up-stairs, and right into the arms of a tall, stalwart young man, coming somewhat hastily down.

If she looked hot before, she looks ten times hotter now, a bright blush dyeing her face as she looks up in startled dismay to meet the laughing gaze of the pair of handsome blue eyes fixed quizzically upon her own brown ones.

"Well, little cousin, you are in a hurry!" and "O Archie, is it you?" bursts simultaneously from the lips of either; then he holds her off at arm's length with cousinly familiarity, and scans her blushing, dimpling face.

"Upon my word you do the place credit!" he says, mischievously. "What a color you have, child!"

"No wonder," cries Evelyn, indignantly, blushing more and more, "when you stare at me so rudely."

"Well," he laughs, "as you would come into my arms, what can you expect? I shall not let you go either without toll!" And, in spite of her struggles, he impresses one

long kiss on her ripe lips before he lets her go, laughing and trembling, away.

Within her room, seated before the oval mirror prettily framed in lace and pink ribbon, the happy confusion of her thoughts, together with the color in her cheeks, begin to subside.

"He kissed me," she muses, hastily plaiting the brown lengths of hair that, damp with heat, curls itself into little rings on her forehead. "I ought not to have allowed him, but I could not help it. Oh, I hope no one saw! I shall never dare to look at him again! Dear me, there's the dinner-bell!"

As she gathers the last thick plait into its place, some one knocks at the door, and, in answer to her gentle "Come in," there enters a vision of surpassing loveliness, — a girl of some three-and-twenty years, dressed in floating clouds of silvery sparkling white, a single lily drooping from her wonderful yellow hair, — a girl bewitching as a siren, with something of a siren's cruelty lurking far down in the depths of her lustrous dark eyes. Laying her small ringless hand on Evelyn's shoulder, she cries, — if any accent of that murmuring voice can be called a cry, —

"What have you been doing, Eve? You are quite a fright, — as red as a turkey-cock! And are you going down in that dress?" glancing contemptuously at Eve's simple, untrimmed muslin.

Evelyn replied simply, —

"I have not time to change it. Besides, no one will notice me where you are, Belle."

The siren is greedy of admiration, and loves it from any and every one, so smiles sweetly as she condescends to arrange a creamy rose in Evelyn's hair, remarking the while that she does not look "half bad after all." Nor does she, though quite cast into the shade by her friend's magnificent beauty, of which effect her friend is delightfully conscious.

Belle Leicester is a woman with a mission, — that mission being to marry money, position, and good looks, — the first most certainly, the two latter if possible. She has been taught from her cradle to be what she is, — purely selfish, — and wears her truly feline claws well hidden in their velvet sheath. Being beautiful and fascinating, and not wanting in discernment, she soon won Evelyn's unworlly heart at the

fashionable school where they first met, and now fully intends to win Archie Eversdale's, who happens to have all the three desirable matrimonial qualifications. It does not matter to her in the least that Eve loves him, — a fact she very soon discovered; that Evelyn may suffer matters as little. She, Belle Leicester, wishes to have, therefore ought to have, therefore must have. Such is the creed of her kind.

The long drawing-room, one more of comfort than of show, is full of sunshine and scent as the two girls enter. Half a dozen people are assembled there. Sir Ellery Yorke, an undersized, portly man, beaming with efflorescent good-humor, and his wife, Lady Yorke, are questioning Archie Eversdale as to his estate, and other family matters. Rosaline, eldest, and Mollie, youngest daughter of the house of Yorke, together with Monkton, Archie's elder brother, a dark-faced man with penetrating eyes, are persuading, with unnecessary noise and laughter, a fat King Charles spaniel to beg for sugar.

Not until Archie's eyes first fall on Belle Leicester has Evelyn's gentle heart known a jealous pang; but his undisguised admiration as he bows over her hand, and the absorbed way in which he watches the alluring grace of her every movement, to the utter neglect of his aunt's remarks, teach her what such pangs may be.

At dinner he is placed between Belle and Rosaline, whilst she, seated far away, can see them only now and then between the drooping ferns which form a perfect grove in the centre of the table. She sees in some of those moments how he bends over Belle in his tenderly chivalrous way, apparently unconscious of Rosaline on his other side, — unconscious too of Lady Yorke's surprised looks and Mollie's occasional teasing questions. She sees the subtle, sweet glances Belle bestows upon him, the bewildering way in which she flatters him with her smiles. Ah, how adorably beautiful she is! How could any man see and not worship her? So thinks Evelyn as, pale enough now and too heart-sick to respond with animation to Monkton's gay speeches, she pretends to eat her duckling. At length, after a pause, during which Monkton privately votes her stupid, he remarks, confidentially, —

"What an awfully pretty girl that Miss Chester is?"

"Her name is Leicester," corrects Evelyn, rousing herself.

"Oh, bother! What's in a name? Is her hair dyed, do you suppose?"

"Dyed! Absurd, Monkton! You never saw dyed hair of that color so full of sunshine and life."

"Well, little cousin, stand up for your pretty friend. It is not often I hear a girl do that, I can tell you. But, pardon me, I have seen dyed hair exactly that color. However, my younger brother — Archie is only younger by two years — seems to think her perfection. A case of 'love at first sight,' I fancy. There's a sort of likeness between them too, only Archie's hair is not dyed. Now be cross!"

"I am not cross. But do you really think them alike? They say people generally prefer a different style from their own. I should not have thought Archie would admire fair women."

"Oh, yes, he always did! I have often heard him say there's something more attractive, something softer about a fair style of beauty. Now I think quite the contrary, especially in Miss Leicester's case."

But what Monkton thinks is of no consequence to Evelyn, and, remembering her own dark eyes and hair, her heart sinks within her, and she is silent during the conclusion of dinner.

"Be the day weary and never so long,  
At length it ringeth to even-song,"

mutters Monkton, as Lady Yorke rises, — a somewhat uncomplimentary quotation, did Evelyn hear it, which she does not, although she hears Belle's whispered "Do not be long!" and sees Archie's ardent, responsive glance as he holds the door open while they pass out. Lady Yorke barely keeps awake till she reaches her favorite seat, and when there sinks at once with dignified composure into a doze. Rosaline opens the piano and begins to sing "The Forsaken," *sotto voce*. Being a rosy-cheeked damsel, decidedly inclining to *embonpoint*, with brown, merry eyes, and an ever-ready laugh, she of course sings the saddest, most sentimental ballads that are to be found, and just now this is her favorite. Mollie, standing by her side, plays the air in the ~~lute~~ with one finger, also an occasional false note, with the fat spaniel in her arms.

Evelyn, hot and weary, crosses the room to the conservatory, where several birds,

caged amongst masses of gorgeous bloom, sing in emulation of Rosaline. There is a drowsy languor in the air: not a breath comes in at the open glass doors past the silver-birches on the terrace; not a breath stirs the jasmine clinging to the veranda, to detach its evanescent blossom-stars. Beyond the radiant garden, murmurous with bees, one can see the waters of the river gleam and glide, as they skirt the hills, until half a mile or so from Fair Lea they spread into a broad, deep lake, from which purple mountains rise on one side sheer and awful, on the other side gently sloping, covered with shrubs and flowers that seem to whisper to the lilies and irises floating near. Apparently admiring this fair view stands Evelyn, fanning herself fitfully, her pain-haunted thoughts with handsome, flickle Archie, who, on his part, though no doubt anxious to leave the dining-room, discusses his claret and walnuts with some faint interest.

"And this is what I have looked forward to so long!" she sighs to herself, while "He will return, I know he will!" warbles Rosaline, emphatically. "I know he used to care for me, — he did his best to make me sure of it; and now to change so suddenly! I have lived on his words and looks all this weary while; he kissed me so tenderly too only a few hours ago; and now — now!" Tears fall on the white rose which her fingers absently caress. "Belle is so beautiful, I ought to have known he would like her, — beautiful and brilliant, and I am neither! He cannot help loving her, and how could any one he loved help loving him? She does not know I care, — she is not to blame. I must forget my foolish dream of happiness and love."

"Evelyn," cooes a soft voice in her ear, "will you come into the garden with me? It's so hot and stupid here. Lady Yorke's asleep, and that hateful song Rose is groaning over gives me the horrors. Come."

For a moment Evelyn stands looking mutely at her friend, as if to see wherein the spell of her beauty lies. Belle half closes her glittering eyes, as though languid with heat, but the delicate sea-shell pink in her cheeks does not deepen, — she is far from being vulgarly hot; the sunbeams play hide-and-seek in the amber glory of her hair; a crimson leaf or two has dropped on to her dress. Truly no fairer being ever dazzled man's sight. With an unconscious

ugh, which Belle interprets well enough, Evelyn suffers her to take her hand, and they go out together.

Meanwhile in the dining-room the wine steadily decreases. Old Sir Ellery retires to a sofa, spreads a spotless kerchief over his red beaming countenance, and begins anon to snore loudly. Archie and Monkton are equally eager to retire, but neither shows the least apparent desire to do so. Monkton begins, helping himself to a peach.

"What a quiet, say-nothing girl Evelyn is! She was up a tree or something all dinner-time: I could scarcely get a word out of her."

"No?" queries Archie, staring at his boots. "You must have bored her then. But I say, Monk, what a glorious creature that Belle Leicester is! such eyes, such hair, such hands! By Jove, she made time fly! I assure you I couldn't have told what we were eating!"

"Dare say?" says Monk, a little surprised at his brother's excessive enthusiasm. "Beautiful as an houri, as fellows in books say; but I confess I have my doubts as to genuineness, you know, — eh?"

"What do you mean?" cries Archie, fiercely. "I never knew such a man, — always on the look-out for flaws! Of course it's genuine."

"Well, you certainly ought to know, — you sat near enough to her. But one sees so much Rachelism now-a-days that one learns to doubt the rose's bloom itself. I say, uncle will have a fit if he goes on in this way." Sir Ellery's snores have waxed loud to an abnormal degree, and suggest apoplexy to the most ignorant mind. "Do you not think I ought to wake him?"

"Not for worlds," speaks Archie, anxiously impressive; "he'd be as mad as a March hare if you did. But he does make a row! I vote for a quiet weed in the garden or a pull down the river." This he suggests with as nonchalant an air as though he had not just now caught the gleam of a woman's dress between the trees.

"The very thing! And look, there go the two girls: we'll join them."

"Like two beautiful butterflies fluttering over the flowers," is Monkton's gay remark when they are overtaken; for which Belle rewards him by a musical laugh and a slow, sweet glance, which has the immediate effect of bringing him to her side if not to her feet.

So they stroll on a little in front, leaving the other two to follow, the yellow sunshine crowning Belle as rests the glory in "storied windows" on some mediæval saint.

"What a lovely evening!" says Eve, nervously anxious to break the constrained silence — alas, how new is this constraint! — which falls upon them. "And how the birds are singing, are they not?"

"Happy creatures!" sighs Archie, sentimentally, "'Teach me half the gladness that thy brain must know,' — there, it's too warm to quote even Shelley. Will you have a row on the river, my — cousin?"

His voice takes a tender tone; the significance of his pause brings a rich color to Evelyn's face, — she looks well when she blushes, — and her heart beats quickly. Does he care for her after all then? But, before she can reply, he goes on, carelessly, —

"Monk will take you, and I must do the honors to your friend."

"I will not come!" cries Eve, impetuously, flashing quite a fierce glance at him.

"Will not come!" he echoes, his conscience smiting him. "Do come, dear Eve, to please me. Of course I would much rather take you, but I must be polite; and — and the fact is, she expressed a wish to row on the river with me; but you *must* come too."

Evelyn is ashamed of her momentary passion; therefore, while perfectly unconvinced by his last speech, she answers, lightly, —

"Oh, it was only a joke! I meant to come all the time. Monk and I shall enjoy ourselves as much as you."

To this he answers nothing. Presently Belle is seated in one of the small boats moored by the garden bank, with the flowers she has gathered clustered on her silvery skirts, her bright hair, drooping slightly, set off by the scarlet of a little shawl she wears. In answer to her gay salute, Evelyn mechanically kisses her hand, and then she watches them float swiftly away beyond the bend of the river, Archie's deep-toned laughter jarring on her heart. Suddenly she becomes aware that Monkton is looking at her curiously, and, starting, blushing crimson, she jumps lightly to her place.

"'Drifting, drifting, on and on,'"

sings Monkton, softly, while Evelyn listens as one in a dream. The oars make music in the opal water, rich sunset light dyes the

white, queenly lilies, touching the fir-trunks with a red finger. Down toward them floats a passion-flower, — it is one Archie wore in his coat. She leans from the boat, almost upsetting it in her anxiety to reach the treasure.

"Take care, Eve! What is it you want? Not that trumpery flower! You want it? Sit still then, — I'll soon have it out."

In another moment she has it, and places it all wet and torn in the bosom of her dress. Monk, sitting opposite, resting on his oars, thinks how fair she is, after all, — a tender beauty, soft and pale like that of evening, insensibly stealing deeply into one's heart. As he looks at her drooping profile, with its background of shimmering water and dark, loose hair, he thinks of Evangeline going her mournful quest, and a couplet he has read somewhere occurs to him, —

*"Though the morning is glad and gay,  
Thou art many times more sweet."*

He feels an undefinable sensation at his heart, — he is twenty-six, and has never loved a woman yet, — a strange longing to touch the little hand lying inertly on the boat's edge, but he refrains.

"You are very silent, my lady of Shal-lot," he says. "Don't you know I have not seen you for years, yet you hardly deign to speak to me? Absence has not made your heart fonder, at any rate."

"O Monk," she answers, raising her head with a faint smile, "I fear I am very stupid! I don't know how it is, — my head aches so. I think the heat has upset me."

"Dear little Eve, I am so sorry: let me bathe your head." And before she can prevent him he has dipped his handkerchief into the cool water, and, gently as any woman, laid it on her throbbing head. What can she do but smile gratefully up at him as she murmurs, —

"Thank you. That is nice."

Her voice, her smile, thrills his heart.

"I do not know how it is," he bursts out, "but you are so different from other girls, Evelyn. I know lots, and they are either too fast or too slow, or too down upon a man, or something. But you make me feel better simply by being with you, — make me think better, nobler thoughts, — do you understand? Now there's your friend, — Archie's wild about her, — well, I believe she would lead a fellow to the bad in" —

"O Monk, Monk!" interrupts Evelyn, reproachfully: "you do not know dear Belle, nor how good she was to me at school. If you knew her better I am sure you would not think so."

"*Chacun a son gout*," mutters Monk; then aloud, "I will think her an angel if it will please you. But you look so pale, poor child, — tea will refresh you. Auntie and the rest will be wondering about us." This he says while turning the boat's head round.

"Ought we not to wait for Belle?" suggests Eve, timidly.

"O dear, no! Archie's smitten so hard, there's no telling when he'll bring her back. Should n't wonder if he proposes to her first. After all, you know" — with confidential candor — "he's an awful duffer where women are concerned. But you are actually shivering: what a brute I am to talk so much! Let me fold your shawl round you. And see, there's the star of love and dreams! It must be late; but I'll lay on now."

Half an hour later they enter the Fair Lea drawing-room. A chorus of voices greets them with, "Where have you been?" "Where is Belle?" "How pale you are!" Two or three visitors are added to the family group, — Harry Rosenthorpe, the Fair Lea doctor, and his sister; he, good-looking, self-possessed, commonplace; she, a small, pale creature, with large, restless eyes stamping her as the reverse of commonplace.

Rosaline is dispensing tea at a side-table, assisted in her graceful task by the Reverend Remigius Wyse, a young clergyman, — or priest, as he insists, — of ritualistic views. As the cousins enter he has just contrived to upset the cream-ewer on to the floor by way of "pointing a moral" probably, thereby winning the eternal regard of Floss, the spaniel, who much enjoys the contents.

Evelyn sinks wearily into a chair, leaving Monk to explain, and takes from his attentive hand a cup of tea, he remaining beside her with his own. Through the open window they see the garden "faint with bloom" lying dimly beneath the glimmering sky, into whose unfathomable depths the July moon sails full and clear. The river gleams, every leaf is edged with silver, and in the pauses of conversation the nightingale's liquid strain is heard. In such hours love grows quickly to full flower.

Almost unconsciously to himself it is putting forth its blossoms in Monkton's heart, its delicate perfume pervading his whole being. He does not think of asking himself why earth tonight seems so like Elysium, — an Elysium with Evelyn's eyes for stars. He is simply blindly, unquestionably happy. When knowledge comes, — for such divine ignorance is seldom long-lived, — will it be for good or evil?

Meanwhile Archie and Belle have reached the landing-place. Her hands are full of water-lilies; her white dress lies long and damp around her, as she stands waiting on the brink whilst he fastens the boat securely; her golden hair, all unbound, streams glittering over her shoulders; in her half-shut, cruel eyes a dangerous light gathers. Beneath the moon she stands, Undine personified, — Undine, without a soul, — or, better still, the serpent-witch, as Christabel just beheld her, richly clad and "beautiful exceedingly." Then Archie, flushed with rowing, excited by the violent flirtation in which he has largely assisted, joins her; there is no sound save the lapping of the tide against the steps, a delicious fragrance fills the air, and a nightingale begins to sing.

"Listen!" murmurs Belle, nestling to his side, raising her eyes to meet his.

He is young, vain, impressionable; beauty of all kinds has a powerful influence over his senses, not his heart, though the two are often confounded; other excuse for him there is none. Intoxicated by her proximity, the dreamy twilight, most of all by her irresistible beauty, he clasps her with a sudden movement in his arms, his good angel forgotten, and kisses her red mouth again and again.

"O Archie, — Mr. Eversdale, — do you forget that we scarcely know each other? Oh, what would people say?"

"That you were divine, and I a presumptuous fool!" he answers in impassioned tones, conscious of having gone farther than he had intended, yet despising the very consciousness. "Forgive me, Miss Leicester, and forget my rudeness, — your loveliness is my only excuse."

"Though I may forgive, how can I forget?" breathes Belle, pathetically, turning her head shyly away, with a perfection of coquetry.

"Only let me have your forgiveness then, and I will beseech you to remember, as I

shall!" he murmurs, oblivious of everything but the enchantment of the moment, her beauty — partly artificial though he knows it to be — bewildering his foolish brain more and more.

"You, Mr. Eversdale? Oh, I know what men's memories are! In a few hours' time you will go back to your life of business and pleasure, with which I have nothing to do, and will never think of poor little me any more. And I — ah! what shall I do?"

Her face droops, till she hides it in the wet lilies, shining whitely through the yellow glory of her hair. Is that a drop of water or a tear upon her hand? The bare thought maddens him. "Beauty in distress" — has it not ever melted the susceptible heart of youth? Passing one arm round her waist, drawing her closely to him, he whispers, —

"Say that you will be wholly my o" —

"Oh, here you are!" shouts a childish voice, and Mollie darts upon them from a side-path, to Archie's annoyance, Belle's unutterable anger, and the confusion of both. "I was coming to look for you," proceeds the child; "every one thinks you are drowned!" So she bears them triumphantly along with her.

Belle has an air of subdued triumph, and Archie of awkward consciousness, as they enter and encounter Sir Eliery's rather pointed "chaff." Belle, hastening to Evelyn, pours out her anxiety at her darling's pallor. "I'm so very sorry!" she declares, when Monkton tells the cause; "so afraid it was my selfish fault; but really Mr. Eversdale was quite too irresistible, — indeed I could scarcely persuade him to return at all! And am I not a fright with my hair all down? But he would not allow me to fasten it up!"

Evelyn longs intensely for the quiet retirement of her own room. There she will at least have solitude and darkness; there she may discard this miserable mask of indifference, — there weep out the pent-up agony which is breaking her heart. Slowly drag on the weary minutes, which to Monkton are the brightest of his life.

"Poor little cousin!" he whispers, tenderly, his heart aching at the sight of a woman's suffering, as he places a cushion for her head, and screens her from the glaring light.

She thanks him with a piteous smile, moaning to herself, —



"Archie does not care,—does not even notice that I am ill."

No; that gay young Lothario is hanging over Belle's chair, while she pretends to arrange her lilies, which the Reverend Remigius has begged for church decorations. His long, fair mustache almost brushes Belle's delicate cheek. Even in her agony Evelyn cannot help thinking what a pretty group they make. Then Belle gives him a waxen bud, which he kisses, not too furtively, she smiling her siren smile, sweet and dangerous, the while. Then Sir Ellery, deep in politics, calls Monkton to give his opinion on some knotty point, and little Zeta Rosenthorpe, crossing the room with a peculiarly noiseless gliding movement, comes to a footstool at Evelyn's feet, settling thereon like some dainty, golden-plumaged humming-bird.

"Is your head so very bad, *cara*?"

Wonderful sympathy is expressed in the bell-like accents, and, instead of irritating Evelyn, as the question asked by another would have done, it seems unaccountably to soothe her.

"Very bad, dearie, and I am so dreadfully tired."

"Darling," proceeds Zeta, abruptly, yet with tenderness too great to wound, "your poor little heart aches more than your head. Do not deny it to me, — I know."

Evelyn's eyes droop beneath the blaze of Zeta's, tell-tale crimson stains the pure paleness of her cheek.

"I do not think," Zeta goes on, as if to herself, "that men often love such women as Belle Leicester. They are fascinated by them,—intoxicated, I should call it, by such mere beauty. And what glorious beauty it is,—all of earth though,—no wings there but butterfly's! Look at her, *cara*! She sits purposely where the full light sparkles on her golden hair, leaving her dark eyes soft,—soft as they can be!—in shadow. See how white and small her hand is, lying on the crimson velvet of her chair! see how she looks up at your cousin! Do I hurt you, darling? He is fascinated, but he does not love her; nay, such fascination generally ends in loathing."

Making a violent effort to appear indifferent, Evelyn retorts, —

"I will not have you speak so of Belle! And why should not any man love her? She is quite as good as any one else, and better. Besides, if you suppose I care

whether he loves her or not, you are utterly mistaken."

Zeta makes no reply; she only folds her fairy hands on the yellow satin of her dress, and lifts her eyes to Eve's face, — mesmeric, soul-touching, soul-alluring eyes, drawing truth from her friend's heart utterly and completely! Then she smiles dreamily, takes Evelyn's hand in her own, kisses it fervently, and moves away as noiselessly as she came, to seek Lady Yorke, who has been yawning behind her fan for an hour past. At this moment Archie's glance falls on Evelyn, left alone. He is a little tired of the brilliancy of the lovely, exacting Belle, a little out of love with his tinsel toy. He hesitates. Shall he join his cousin, whom conscience loudly accuses him of neglecting? Hesitating, he is lost. Monkton takes the vacant chair by her side, and it is too late forever. Anger and disdain swell his masculinely unreasonable heart, as, furtively glancing over Belle's head, he beholds how tenderly his brother bends over Evelyn, adjusting shawls and cushions with a gentle hand, while she smiles her innocent, pleased smile, and apparently a most interesting conversation goes on between them. He does not imagine how unutterably her heart is yearning for him. By and by some one asks Zeta to sing. She goes immediately to the piano as to a thing beloved, and without any lady-like graces or timidity she begins Mrs. Browning's beautiful "*Bianca among the nightingales*" to a melody of her own composing. She sings with deepest pathos, with passionate emphasis; one can almost hear the rise and fall of the nightingale's liquid strain in the music's rich cadences; one can almost hear Bianca's breaking heart in the singer's wondrous tones. She sings as might some *lost soul*, — so despairingly, so tearfully, so exquisitely! When amid a breathless silence she leaves the piano there are tears in every eye. Sir Ellery blows his nose angrily; the Reverend Remigius presses Rose's hand in his emotion; as for Eve, she can scarcely stifle her sobs, the heroine's woe seems so like her own; while Archie's heart is stirred to its depths. Can it be that he has been faithless? Has he left the true heart for the new beauty? He thinks of a day the previous summer when he stood with Eve on the terrace and bade her think of and pray for him always; he remembers how tears welled into her soft eyes as he took

her hands in his, whispering, "Good-by, my darling!" The old pure love rises like a repressed fountain in his heart, and down sinks the hollow phantom before it. "Fool," he soliloquizes, "to have trifled this precious time away! And now perhaps to have lost her!" With bitter remorse he watches Monkton fold her shawl carefully round her, assist her from the sofa with most lover-like tenderness, and lead her to the door. It closes behind them both, and how long it is before he comes back—alone!

"Evelyn has gone to bed with a bad headache," he says, advancing towards them. "She told me to give her love to you, Miss Leicester."

"She is so delicate," cooes Belle, "so sadly delicate. Now nothing hurts me. I am stronger than I look; though I expect I look as red and strong as a milkmaid just now, do I not?" turning with a bewitching smile to Archie.

But he is gone,—yes, has actually left her to talk to that pale-faced witch, Zeta Rosenthorpe! Finding his brother politely impervious to her charms, cruelly mortified and angry, she deigns for the first time to notice Dr. Rosenthorpe, who is only too proud to be noticed, having watched her with admiration and Archie with envy all the evening. Answering with alacrity the invitation of her *beaux yeux*, he leaves Sir Ellery and his politics with very scant ceremony indeed.

## CHAPTER II.

The voice of the river, calling in the warm hush of the fragrant midsummer night, sends its message through Evelyn's open, woodbine-guarded window to where she lies asleep in the moonlight, which spectre-like glides in between the loose white curtain-folds, and sheds its pale beams on her brow. All the house is buried in slumber: there is no sound, no movement, save the river's monotonous murmur. The sound brings a dream to Evelyn. She dreams that she rises from the bed whereon she threw herself a few hours before weeping in her agony; her crushed muslin dress clings limply round her; the long soft masses of dark hair frame her slight figure in ebony. Silently she opens the door, and steals down the moonlight-haunted corridor through the open conservatory door into the garden. The dark leaves stir uneasily

as she passes; Zephyr wakes a moment from his perfumed slumber, sighs when he beholds her, and sinks to rest again. The lilies lift their pearl chalices toward her heedless hand; the love-bright rose, weeping, scatters its satiny petals before her path. Though the elves would detain her, she passes swiftly on, for she is going to Archie. She knows that he is waiting longingly for her somewhere,—the river knows where, the river will lead her to him. So, in her dream, she goes lightly down the wet, mossy steps into the boat, and floats with it down the stream. Wild, exulting joy upbears her spirit: the warm air thrills with love-whispers and silvery echoes of his name. Rare blossoms, from whose hearts of fire rises a golden mist of odor, star the banks on either side, and burn down far into the transparent water; crystal mountains, decked with opal-like fire, pierce the azure sky; lilies, "fairer than any waking eyes behold," rock on the river's bosom, from whose depths lovely faces, all with eyes like Zeta Rosenthorpe's, rise, smile at her, and disappear. Ah! what was that? A laugh,—soft, yet cruel; musical, yet malignant, and full of triumph. There, on the emerald bank, stands Belle, crowned like a queen, pointing scoffingly at her. While Evelyn looks shudderingly, she sees Archie coming rapidly through the trees; Belle runs to meet him, and is folded to his breast. His endearing accents reach the dreamer's ear and lie like ice upon her breast.

"Archie, Archie!" she wails; but they only laugh mockingly, and yet louder, as she begins to weep wildly.

"I hate you, I hate you!" chants Belle, monotonously. And "I hate you!" echoes Archie; while all the while Zeta is singing afar off "Bianca among the nightingales."

The silvery whispers in the air turn to ominous mutterings, like distant thunder; the flowers die, uttering human groans; while solemnly down from heaven descends a gigantic-winged demon of darkness, awful, inexorable. A creeping horror seizes her, the mysterious over-mastering horror only known in dreams. She must reach Archie, she must touch his hand before she dies, even though he hate her. With one more imploring cry,— "Archie, Archie?"—she springs from the boat and plunges madly into the water. The plunge, all too real, wakes her from her somnambulistie

trance. In one flashing moment she remembers all: she sees the dim shore so cruelly close, the wan moon going down behind the firs, even a pitiless star above her. There is a gurgling cry, a struggle, and the water closes over her head.

When at last Archie Eversdale finds himself alone in his room, he is in a thoroughly bad temper, evinced by the way in which he kicks his portmanteau aside, knocks a chair over, and flings his generally respected dress-coat anywhere. He opens his window with a bang, spitefully crushing a poor brown moth in the process. A good deal relieved by these manifestations, he dons his shooting-coat, leans his elbow on the broad, old-fashioned sill, round which Gloire de Dijon roses cluster, lights a cigar, and stares out over the garden.

"Fool!" he mutters, presently, — he alludes to the beauteous Belle, — "fool, with her paint, her dyed hair, and her hateful eyes! and fool a thousand times myself to be so miserably beguiled by them! Pah! The paint came off on my lips when I kissed her; yet I was mad enough to say what I did. However, I am sane now, if it is not too late. I've had a narrow escape too. O Mollie, you were an angel in disguise! A little more and she'd have had me up for breach of promise. What a look she gave me when I wished her good-night in what I meant to be an unconscious, friendly way! The malevolence of it fairly frightened me. Ah, well! I richly deserved it!"

Then he is silent a long time, lazily watching the smoke of his cigar curl up and vanish, thinking how he will seek Evelyn on the morrow, and endeavor by every means in his power to make her forget his folly.

"What if I should have lost her?" is his next thought. "That idiot Monk would be only too glad to get her, I know. Pretending that she was a say-nothing too! Such bosh! I do hate that kind of hypocrisy. Why can't a fellow say what he means? I cannot imagine what infatuated me so with that Leicester girl. It must have been a mild form of insanity. My little Eve, my true love, will you forgive and love me still? I shall not rest till I have the answer from your sweet lips. It's no use to think of sleeping. I'll have a stroll by the river. How Monk — who does n't know what real love is — would laugh! He

will have been snoring like a grampus this last hour through."

Lighting another cigar, he descends, covered with rose-leaves, if not with glory, with athletic ease from his window by means of the trellis-work. It is a heavenly night, faintly moonlit, balmy, warm, and silent: a very night for love and romance, for Jessica and Lorenzo.

With both hands in his pockets he strolls along, making good resolutions, by the shimmering, lily-decked river. Suddenly he pauses; a cold thrill runs through him, chilling his blood. Surely that was Evelyn's voice, — Archie, Archie!" He stands listening, but all is silent. It must have been a fancy; yet he feels strangely uneasy. Could it be Evelyn? It sounded like a cry of distress. Forcing his way through prickly gorse and rose-bushes to the river's verge, he looks up and down, fearing he knows not what. Even while he looks a boat slowly rounds the bend of the river into the fading moonlight; a white-robed form with flowing hair rises up like a vision; stretching both arms wildly out, it shrieks loudly, imploringly, agonizingly, "Archie, Archie!" As one in a dream, who cannot move, he sees it spring into the water and disappear. "Is it indeed a dream?" He stands nerveless with horror for a moment, and again loses his chance. There is a rush through the close bushes, a crackling of branches, a plunge, and a dark head appears swimming toward where the vision sank. It is Monkton. Roused by the sight, assured it was indeed Evelyn, despair and jealous love struggling for mastery, Archie tears off his coat, dashes in, swimming with the strength and swiftness of madness after him. If, he thinks, he can but reach her first, she is his own forever; but Monkton has her long floating hair in his grasp, clasps her closely, and bears her swiftly to land, Archie following. Then Monkton raises her till her face lies on his breast, — a dead, rigid face, — on which Archie's eyes fasten hungrily as he groans, all his passion spent, "Too late, too late!" His brother, who has neither heard nor seen him till this moment, starts violently, but it is not a time for questions and answers, scarcely for surprise.

"Help me with her!" he gasps, thinking Archie's exclamation refers to Evelyn's deathly face. "Pray Heaven it is not too late!" So Archie helps to hold her up, and between them the drowned lily is brought

to shore. "Run on, Archie," says Monk, "and wake them all. We shall be obliged to take her home; there's nowhere nearer; and I will bring Evelyn as quickly as possible." Then, sternly, for his brother is motionless, he adds, "Be quick, man, can't you?"

"You shall not have her, Monkton!" cries Archie, in passionate pain. "She belongs to me! she is mine! You have no right to touch her even. I love her! Do you hear? I love her!"

"You love her — you!" retorts Monkton *as passionately*, "after your conduct this day! A paltry, pitiful love I should be ashamed to own! Touch her if you dare! Come, get on."

"I tell you I do love her!" wails the young man, a heavy sob catching his breath, "dastard though I am; and she loves me. O Monk, if you have any pity, let me have her now! If she — I mean afterward I will yield her to you entirely."

Monkton's generous heart melts at the sight of his brother's agony.

"O my poor fellow!" he says, sadly, "*what matters it who loves her now, poor little girl? Here, wrap your coat round her. Oh! what can be the meaning of it?*"

He places the pale form in Archie's arms, and they hurry on in silence up the steep path where but yesterday Evelyn went singing her joyous love-lay. Archie's hot tears fall as he presses her to him, striving to bring back warmth to her icy limbs; voiceless prayers ascend from his torn heart's depths; while Monkton, hastening on, calm as one who has no hope, peals the great hall bell loudly. In a short time footsteps are heard; Sir Ellery's voice shouts, —

"Who's there? What is it?"

"Monk and Archie!" shouts back the former, dreading keenly for the unconscious family the blow about to fall on them. "For Heaven's sake, quick!"

Sir Ellery, the butler, and a young footman, all half-dressed, presently appear. Great indeed is their horrified astonishment when they see the brothers coatless, hatless; Archie, like one who *sees naught else*, bearing Evelyn's inanimate form, water dripping heavily from both, her face thrown back on his shoulder, her long hair sweeping the ground. Crawford the butler fairly staggers back. The footman afterward informed an admiring audience in the servants' hall that "nothin' ever give him such a turn in his life; he thought nothin'

else but 'e'd bin and murdered of 'er." Sir Ellery's face is one stupefied note of interrogation.

"Have you — have you killed her?" he at last gasps out.

"Don't stay to ask questions now!" says Archie savagely. "Do you not see she's insensible? Go for a doctor, Crawford — quick — call her mother — light a fire, can't you?"

Lady Yorke comes quickly down, followed by Rosaline, Belle, in elegant deshabille, and the frightened women-servants.

"Oh, don't tell me — don't tell me anything has happened!" she shrieks hysterically.

"Your daughter has been in the river," says Monkton laconically. "Light the fire at once, some of you — we must have hot bricks. And stop all this noise, or we shall never get anything done."

When all is ready Archie will not suffer his lost darling to be moved quite away. He has her head on his arm while Monkton forces brandy between her clenched teeth, he whispers fond words in her deaf ears, chafes her lax hand, kisses her ever and anon — unmindful of every one else — with despairing passion; while Belle in a dim corner watches with eyes that positively glare, in her secret soul a cruel joy that his love is useless now, his repentance all too late; if the prize is not hers, at least it will never be Evelyn's. But is his love useless? Is his repentance too late? Slowly, as bidden by his kisses, the warmth steals back to her heart, the color to her lips, until at last the death-heavy lids slowly unclose, once more love has conquered death, and the sweet soul of Evelyn Yorke awakes to life. Her faint eyes fall on Monkton, who kneels anxiously regarding her. With an effort she murmurs, "Dear Monkton!" and relapses into insensibility. That murmur goes like a knife to Archie's heart.

"She lives, thank Heaven!" he says with a deep sob, half joy, half pain. "Here, Monk, this is doubly your place now." And, relinquishing her to his brother, he hurries from the hall.

Lady Yorke weeps and prays aloud, her face hidden on her husband's shoulder; tears are in all eyes, save those of the watcher in the dim corner. Yes, Evelyn lives. Her spirit had not gone so far on its mystic path that love's voice, strong with remorse and anguish, was vain to recall it —

not so far that love's tender kisses had no charm to win it back.

The long sunny flower-sweet days are ending, though the nameless presence of decay is felt rather than seen as yet. Hectic scarlet stains summer's once fair face, her dying breath seems to weight the air, her blue eyes take a darker, more spiritual light; she looks from earth to heaven, for she knows she is passing hence. All through those bright days has Evelyn lain face to face with Death, fighting her way back from his dark domains, and shielded from his fiery dart by loving care, by unceasing prayers. At last he is vanquished. Today for the first time she has been carried into her dressing-room, and rests, pale as some crushed flower, upon the crimson cushions of her couch. On a little bronze table by her side lie a volume of Keats's poems, some grapes covered with bloom, half hidden among their leaves, and a mass of geraniums, verbenas, and clematis in splendid confusion, which Mollie, on her knees, is arranging for a Parian vase. Something more than the languor of convalescence is upon Evelyn. The sunshine, sloping through the open window, round which jessamine and late roses climb, and the song of a blackbird without, fill her with speechless pain—they are such happy, sorrowless things, and so unsympathetic! Her thoughts are with the past, as they generally are; and presently she asks busy auburn-haired Mollie, —

"Was poor Belle very much hurt when mamma sent her away?"

"Not hurt—cross," replies candid Mollie; "mother told her that, since the very sound of her voice made you worse, she had better go away until you were much better. Of course mother said how sorry she was to lose her, and how sorry you would be if you could know; but it was a fact that people in delirium often took such unaccountable dislikes to their friends. A selfish thing she is—and, oh, how she tried to catch Archie! I heard papa and mamma talking about it, when they did n't know I was there, and"—

"Hush, hush, Mollie! You should not talk so fast; and, if you heard what you were not meant to hear, never tell any one what it was—it is n't honorable. Poor Belle!"—after a pause. "It was hard on her. You see my dream haunted me so."

"What was your dream, dear Eve? You never really told us. Was it really horrid?" asks the little girl curiously.

"Oh, don't ask me! I will tell you some day; but I cannot bear to think of it yet. If you have finished those flowers, will you go and find Monkton, and tell him I should like to see him?"

"Yes, darling!" answers Mollie, kissing her affectionately. "Are you sure you are strong enough for it?"

"Quite, dear. Now run away."

Left alone, Evelyn sinks back with a sigh. Oh, of what good is it all? What pleasure is there in getting strong to bear sorrow and desolation—sunshine without, but none within? Yet she must thank Monkton for saving her useless life.

"He's coming," exclaims Mollie, bursting rather noisily into the room, "and mother says you are not to tire yourself. He was so pleased when I told him you wanted him, and Archie said it was a good thing you did n't want him; but here he is. I'm off;" and with a merry laugh the chatterbox dances away, little guessing the anguish her half-uttered speech causes Eve, who is so white when Monkton comes and takes her hand in his strong warm one that his heart aches for her.

"My poor little cousin," he says very tenderly, pressing her thin hand, "I fear you are far from strong yet; but how glad I am to see you again! Archie and I ran down from town yesterday in the hope of doing so. We shall soon have you downstairs, and shall take great care of our treasure, I can tell you!"

"Dear Monk!" says she, faintly smiling, and struggling for composure. "It's very good of you to say so; but I feel so tired—as if I could not make the effort to come down-stairs, and would rather lie here for ever."

"I know the feeling, dear; it's very hard to bear, but it is only weakness, which you'll soon get over. Meanwhile, did not Rosenthorne say you were not to talk?"

"Oh, yes! But of course I do. I wanted to thank you, dear Monk, for saving me that—that dreadful night—you know."

"Now don't!" he begins hastily; but she lays her hand on his arm, entreating silence, and goes on.

"I had a dream—how strange to think I really got into the boat on the river!—and I never woke till I felt the water. Oh!"—

shuddering irrepressibly — "how cold, how horrible it was!"

"Poor little darling!" says Monkton soothingly. "Don't think of it now. Thank Heaven it's all over, and you are safe."

"Yes—I will not think of that; but there is something I like to think of—how bravely you saved me. How came you to be there?"

"Well, I suppose, like Archie, I'd smoked too much. Anyhow I could not sleep, and took a walk by the river. As for bravery, why there was not an atom about it. Any lad able to swim might have rescued you; but my being there was a 'providence,' as folks say."

"I do thank you, dear, very much. Though my life was little worth saving, I owe it to you. If it had not been for you, I suppose I should have been drowned."

"Well, no, not quite. I wish you did owe your life to me—it would have been selfishly sweet to me. But do you not know that Archie was there too? He jumped in after me. I only just managed to get hold of you first, and he carried you home in his arms. Poor fellow! I never saw him so completely unmanned."

"Archie!" exclaims Eve, sitting bolt-upright, pale as death and almost gasping for breath — "Archie jumped — Archie carried me home! Why did not any one tell me? And I have been thinking him" — Suddenly she recollects herself, and, sinking back, blushes like the "red, red rose."

"So — she loves him," thinks her cousin, watching her closely. "There goes my chance. If I had not been blinder than a bat, I might have known it. Heigho!" Then aloud, with only a slight tremor in his subdued tones, he asks, "Will you not thank him now, Evelyn?"

But she cannot lift her drooping eyes. She whispers, —

"Go, dear Monk — I shall see you again. Heaven bless you!"

"Heaven bless you!" responds Monkton, in a strangely earnest solemn voice; then, stooping reverently, he kisses her fair forehead, looks at her for a moment with voiceless yearning, and softly quits the room, his first brief, quickly shattered dream of love rudely dispelled.

He does not however go and shut himself up in a room to mope, or inveigh bitterly against fate, or even soothe his pained

spirit by writing Byronic verses; but walks straight to the room where he left Archie, and there finds him, his chin in his hands, his elbow on the window-sill, gnawing his long tawny mustache, and staring moodily out. He starts, but does not move when his brother enters — he will know the worst. Monk goes behind him and puts his hand on his head, oh, so gently!

"Well," says Archie brusquely, shaking off the hand and preparing to have his last feeble hope slain, "what is it?"

"She wants you, old fellow. Wait a moment — I shall never speak of this again — but I dreamt, presumptuous idiot that I was, that perhaps she might care for me, since she — well, you remember what she said when first she was conscious that night? I know now that she does not, never did, never will — that's all. Go to her, Archie — good luck be with you!"

Ashamed of his selfish sullenness, overwhelmed by the burst of joy caused by his brother's words and looks, Archie starts up, wrings Monkton's hand — tears of manliest feeling in his eyes the while — and exclaims hoarsely, —

"I'm a brute! Forgive me, dear Monk!"

Then he hurries up to Evelyn's room, leaving Monk to do noble battle with his grief.

How the two hearts beat as he knocks and she cries feebly, "Come in!" How thoroughly the tale of sorrow, repentance, and love is told directly their eyes meet! In a moment he has her in his arms, and she is weeping blissful tears on his breast, while he murmurs incoherently over her, smoothing her soft hair, kissing her pale hands, until she whispers, —

"O Archie, I thought you did not care for me!"

"Darling, don't reproach me! Yet it serves me right that you should doubt my love. I was mad for a few miserable hours once — mad with conceit and vanity — though I never, never loved but you. Forgive me, my own love, my bright bird, my pure lily-flower!"

"But you said it was a good thing I did n't want you when I sent just now for Monkton."

"Yes, darling, because I could not have borne to see you cold and estranged, as I expected you were. Anything else, little one?" — seeing her apparently only half satisfied still.

"Oh, you will think me so silly, Archie! But—but Monk said you admired fair women much more than dark ones. And don't you think perhaps a time may come when you will wish I had been fair?" And down goes Evelyn's blushing face on to his shoulder.

But he will not suffer it to be thus hidden. He lifts it up, looks at her for a moment—a look she is compelled to meet, and which satisfies her inmost soul—and then says earnestly, —

"Yes, I did once say so, darling, but never again can any face, however fair, be as precious, as lovely in my eyes as yours. This is the only fairness"—touching her hot cheek gently—"I shall ever admire; so be at rest, my love."

Then there is a significant pause, after which, with many a smile and tearful

break, Evelyn tells her dream, and his tender soothing words lay its restless shade for ever. Then he says, almost fearfully, so great is his self-reproach, —

"Are you not afraid to trust yourself to me, Eve? I am not half so good a fellow as Monkton."

"No, not half!" she agrees, smiling. "But then, you see, I love you."

Thus after the brief night—which, after all, was but a midsummer night—there dawns for both the long, golden, glorious day. May no darker cloud chase the radiant azure of their sky!—no rougher blast rouse to tempest the glittering calm of the enchanted ocean they now essay! Even if storms do toss their bark, emptying it of gathered flowers, may Heaven-winged Love still stand at the helm, and so bring them ever safely through.